

Community Development Committee

Meeting date: August 17, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 26, 2015

Subject: Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan, Dakota County

District(s), Member(s): District 15, Steven Chavez

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.313

Staff Prepared/Presented: Jan Youngquist, AICP, Manager (651-602-1029)

Division/Department: Community Development, Regional Parks and Natural Resources

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

1. Approve the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan.
2. Require Dakota County to submit information regarding the location and estimated costs for the relocation and development of Camp Sacajawea and the maintenance facility to the Metropolitan Council for approval prior to seeking regional parks funding for these projects.

Background

Dakota County has submitted a master plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park for Council review and approval, which replaces the 2001 master plan for the park. The original master plan for the regional park was prepared in 1980. Lebanon Hills Regional Park is located in southern Eagan and northern Apple Valley. The regional park consists of almost 2,000 acres and more than 120 water basins, with 13 lakes and ponds. Lebanon Hills is known for its trails for hiking, running, skiing, horse riding and mountain biking. The park also has a campground and Camp Sacajawea, which is a retreat center.

The master plan includes priorities for natural resources restoration and recreational development. Some of the improvements proposed in the master plan include adding picnic areas, enhancing the campground, providing opportunities for park visitors to access the lakeshores, and the addition of an accessible paved trail for year-round walking and biking. The proposal for a 6 mile paved trail through the park generated a lot of concern with some local residents.

In response to the public comments on the draft master plan, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners formed a Citizen Panel to further review and comment on the draft plan. The panel met ten times between May and December 2014 and the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan Citizen Panel Final Report was published in January 2015. The Dakota County Board approved the master plan in March 2015, with modifications based on public comment, as shown in Attachment A.

The Council's role in reviewing regional park master plans is to ensure that the master plan is consistent with the Regional Parks Policy Plan and Council policies, and does not negatively impact the Council's other systems—Transportation, Aviation, and Wastewater Services. As long as the master plan meets the criteria in the Regional Parks Policy Plan, the type of development within a regional park is determined through the regional park implementing agency's master planning process and subsequent approval by its governing board.

Rationale

The Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies. The master plan requirements outlined in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* have an effective date of July 1, 2015. The Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan was submitted to the Council prior to July 1, 2015, so it was reviewed subject to the requirements outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*.

Funding

The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$27,519,451, which includes \$7,197,300 for land acquisition, \$8,088,556 for natural resource stewardship, and \$12,233,595 for development.

Approval of this master plan makes the costs eligible for regional parks funding, but does not commit the Council to any funding at this time. Future funding based on this master plan may be awarded through the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund, the Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Council action is required to approve specific grants to Dakota County.

Known Support / Opposition

The Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted the master plan on March 17, 2015 subject to modifications, as shown in Attachment A.

As of August 11, 2015, the Metropolitan Council has received 167 comment statements from 154 individuals in opposition to the master plan; one comment statement of clarification from an individual who was originally opposed to the master plan; and three comment statements in support of the master plan. All comments are included in Attachment B.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission (MPOSC) considered this business item at its meeting on August 4. Ten people addressed MPOSC; three people spoke in favor of the master plan and seven people spoke in opposition. Testimony in favor of the master plan focused on the current lack of accessibility in the regional park and the need to follow the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. Testimony in opposition to the master plan focused on the lack of support for the proposed paved trail and concern regarding Dakota County's citizen participation process.

The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission recommended approval of the proposed action by a vote of 8-1.

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

Meeting date: August 4, 2015

For the Community Development Committee meeting of August 17, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of August 26, 2015

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District(s), Member(s): MPOSC District H, Todd Kemery

Policy/Legal Reference: MN Statute 473.313

Staff Prepared/Presented: Jan Youngquist, AICP, Manager (651-602-1029)

Division/Department: Community Development, Regional Parks and Natural Resources

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The master plan includes priorities for natural resources restoration and recreational development. Some of the improvements proposed in the master plan include adding picnic areas, enhancing the campground, providing opportunities for park visitors to access the lakeshores, and the addition of an accessible paved trail for year-round walking and biking. The proposal for a 6 mile paved trail through the park generated a lot of concern with local residents.

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Known Support / Opposition

The Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted the master plan on March 17, 2015 subject to modifications, as shown in Attachment A. As of July 22, 2015, the Metropolitan Council received 144 comment statements in opposition to the master plan, one comment statement of clarification, and two comment statements in support of the master plan, which are included in Attachment B.

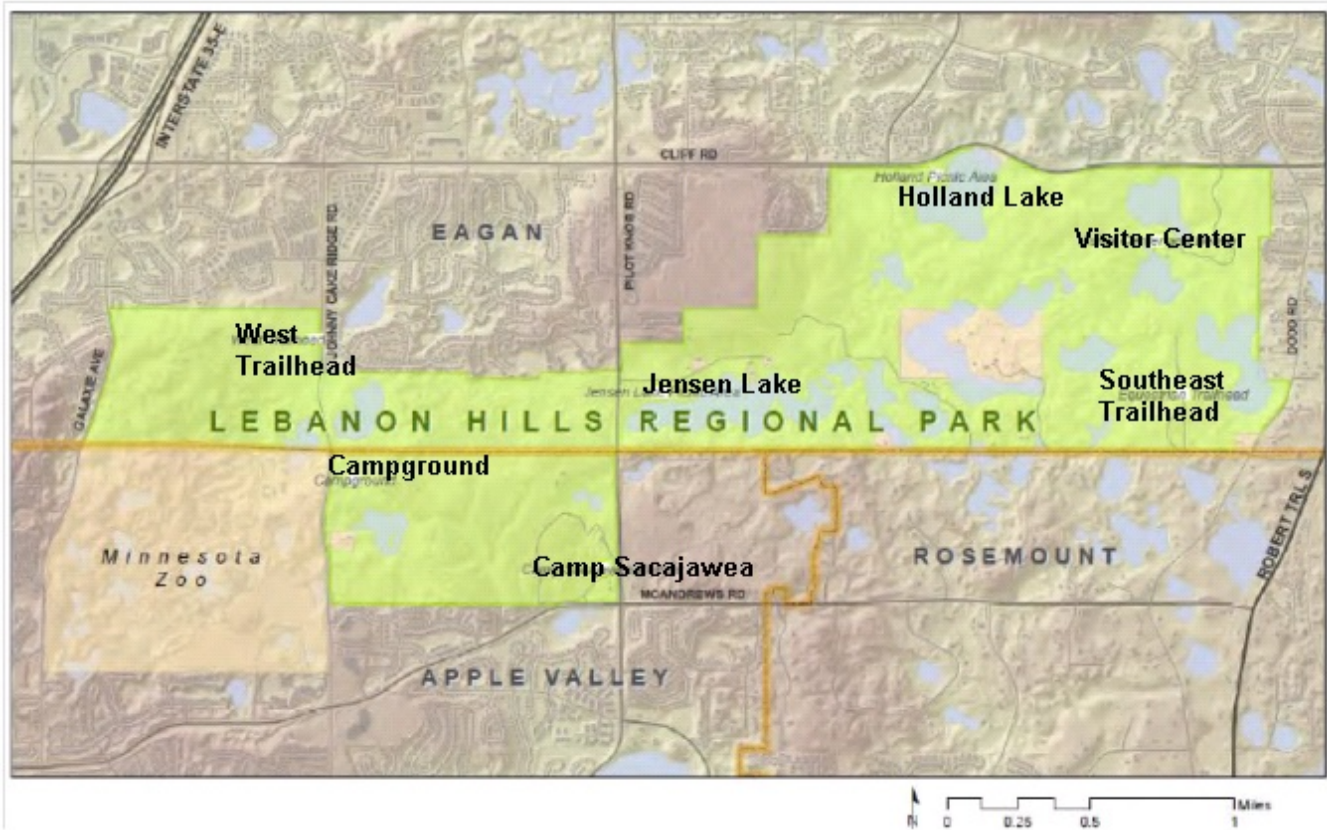
Analysis

The effective date for the master plan requirements outlined in the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* is July 1, 2015 in acknowledgement of master plan planning processes that were already underway when the *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan* was adopted, on February 11, 2015. Because the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan was submitted to the Council prior to July 1, 2015, it was reviewed subject to the requirements outlined in the *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that regional park master plans address the items listed below.

Boundaries and Acquisition

Lebanon Hills Regional Park is located in southern Eagan and northern Apple Valley. The regional park is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Lebanon Hills Regional Park



Acquisition of land for Lebanon Hills began in 1967, with 80 acres around Jensen Lake, east of Pilot Knob Road. At that time, much of the land inside and around the park area was minimally developed and active or retired farmland. More than 40 separate land purchases have occurred over time, bringing the current park size to 1,869 acres. Approximately 90 percent of the park area was acquired in the late 1970s, although acquisition of smaller parcels still continues.

There are ten properties that are within, or partially within, the regional park boundary that are considered inholdings and are planned for future acquisition, as shown on Figure 2. The estimated acquisition costs for these inholdings are \$7,197,300. Figure 3 provides additional information regarding the inholdings, including location, assessed value, and priority status for acquisition.

Figure 2: Lebanon Hills Regional Park Boundaries and Inholdings

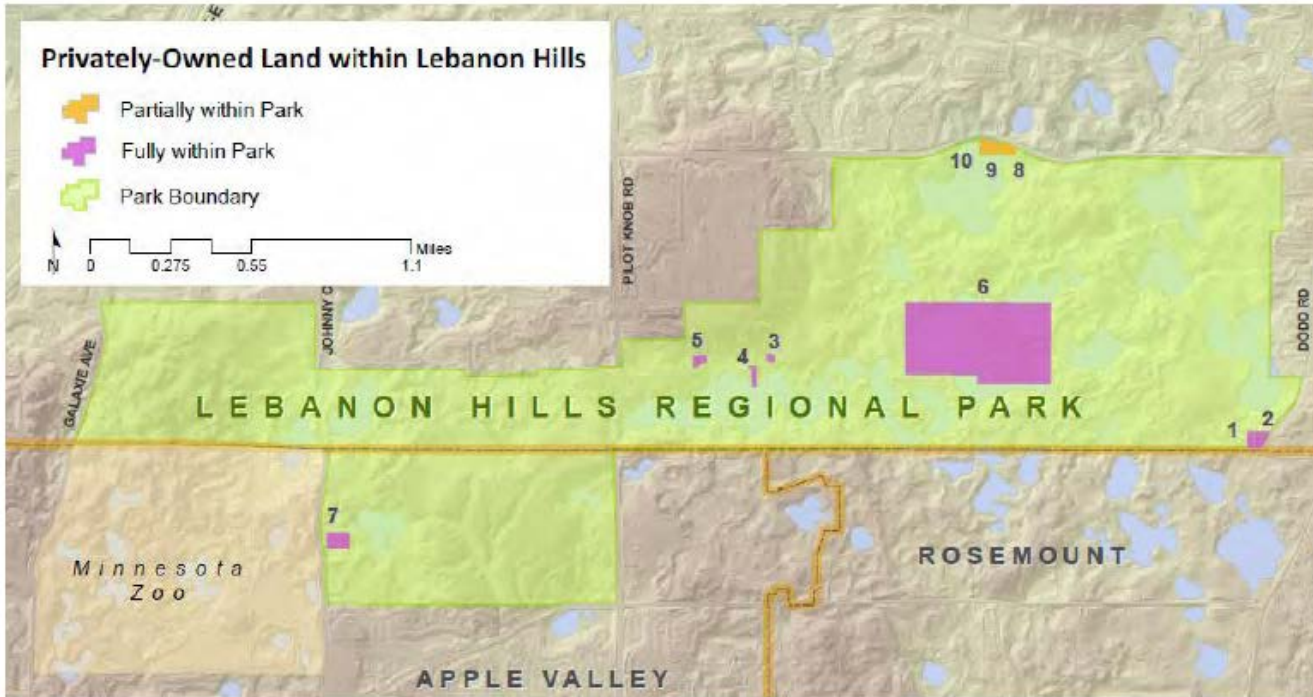


Figure 3: Lebanon Hills Regional Inholding Information

Map #	Property Address, Description, Assessed Value	Priority Status for Acquisition
1, 2	2835 120th Street, Rosemount: 2 parcels, 2.3 Acres, AV \$118,200	Medium
3	1252 Carriage Hills Drive, Eagan: Built 1975, 1 parcel, 0.49 Acres, AV \$222,000	High, as opportunities arise based on proposed Jensen Lake picnic area expansion. Acquisition of #4 could improve lake trail opportunities.
4	1284 Carriage Hills Drive, Eagan: Built 1960, 1 parcel, 0.24 Acres, AV \$276,000	
5	1319 Carriage Hills Drive, Eagan: Built 1982, 1 parcel, 1.0 Acres, AV \$235,500	
6	945 Butwin Road, Camp Butwin: Built 2006, 3 parcels, 55.7 Acres, AV \$6,248,200	Low, based on current use. Large parcel in heart of park with compatible nature-based recreation use. Acquisition would become a very high priority if owners choose to sell.
7	12294 Johnny Cake Ridge Road, Apple Valley: Built 1915, 1 parcel, 3.0 Acres, AV \$97,400	Medium, based on location of Wheaton Trailhead with new campground contact station.
8	995 Cliff Road, Eagan	High, based on proposed Holland trail link to Connector trail. Partial parcels of interest for acquisition or easement – only the portions south of Cliff Road with Holland lake frontage.
10	1007 Cliff Road, Eagan	
11	1015 Cliff Road, Eagan	

Stewardship Plan

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that a master plan include a plan for managing land prior to developing the property for recreation purposes. Since most of Lebanon Hills is an established park, as inholdings are acquired, they will be managed in accordance with other parkland, as described in the Operations section of this staff report (beginning on page 20).

Demand Forecast

The master plan discusses four key demographic trends that were considered in the development of the master plan:

- Continuing population growth
- Aging of the population
- Increasing racial and ethnic diversity
- Economic impacts of the recession

Continuing population growth: Dakota County's population grew to nearly 400,000 in the 2010 census, an increase of 11 percent from 2000. The Council's population forecasts show that Dakota County will grow by approximately 30 percent between 2010 and 2040. The highest growth rates are projected for the northern portion of the County, including West St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Inver Grove Heights, and Eagan. Historically, park visitation in Dakota County has increased at a faster rate than population growth. While the population grew by 11 percent from 2000-2010, visitation to the County's parks grew by 61 percent and visitation to Lebanon Hills grew by more than 100 percent, from 267,400 visits to 542,900 visits. Based on the forecasts for continuing population growth, more people will likely be visiting Lebanon Hills Regional Park in the future. Visitation to Lebanon Hills is expected to grow faster than other County parks because of its location in the urban area of the county as well as its range of recreational activities.

Aging of the population: As the Baby-Boom generation grows older, the average age of Dakota County's population increases. Seniors made up 10 percent of the County's population in 2010 and are projected to be more than 20 percent of the County's population by 2030. As the population ages, the master plan recommends that park planning should consider:

- Facility design to meet accessibility standards and mobility needs
- Services and programs that take into account physical needs, such as print size on materials, or benches and resting spots along trails
- Programs tailored for older adult audience interests and needs

Increasing racial and ethnic diversity: Dakota County is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. In the 2010 census, six percent of the County's population identified their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino, more than double the number in 2000. The percentage of residents identifying themselves as Black or African American doubled in that time period, and significant increases were noted for residents of Asian background.

Dakota County's percentage of foreign born population is also increasing. Between 1990 and 2000, the foreign born population in Dakota County increased 187 percent and increased another 75 percent between 2000 and 2010 to 31,611 people. Almost 8 percent of the total population in the County identified themselves as foreign born in 2010.

Dakota County has the second highest number of non-English languages spoken in the homes of school aged children (98 languages) in the metropolitan area, just behind Hennepin County. Census figures show that 11.2 percent of Dakota County households speak a language other than English at home.

As racial and ethnic diversity in the County continues to increase, park visitors will represent a greater diversity of cultural perspectives, sensitivities and preferences related to recreation, services, and programs. Examples of these preferences include design of picnic shelters to better accommodate extended family gatherings, or multi-language information and programs. The master plan indicates that there may be a need for more targeted outreach and activity-specific introductory programs for cultural groups that are less familiar with outdoor and nature-based recreation opportunities.

Economic impacts of the recession: Real income among County residents has declined over the last decade. The inflation-adjusted median household income level of \$72,324 in 2010 is less than it was in 1989 (\$72,991). Dakota County's household poverty level rose to 4.6 percent. The poverty level for County residents is 7.1 percent, with 10 percent of children under the age of 17 in the County living in poverty. Immigrants, persons of color, and families with children are disproportionately poor within the County. The master plan recommends exploring expanded transit service to the park and providing reduced costs for park programs and equipment rentals for people with limited financial resources.

Development Concept

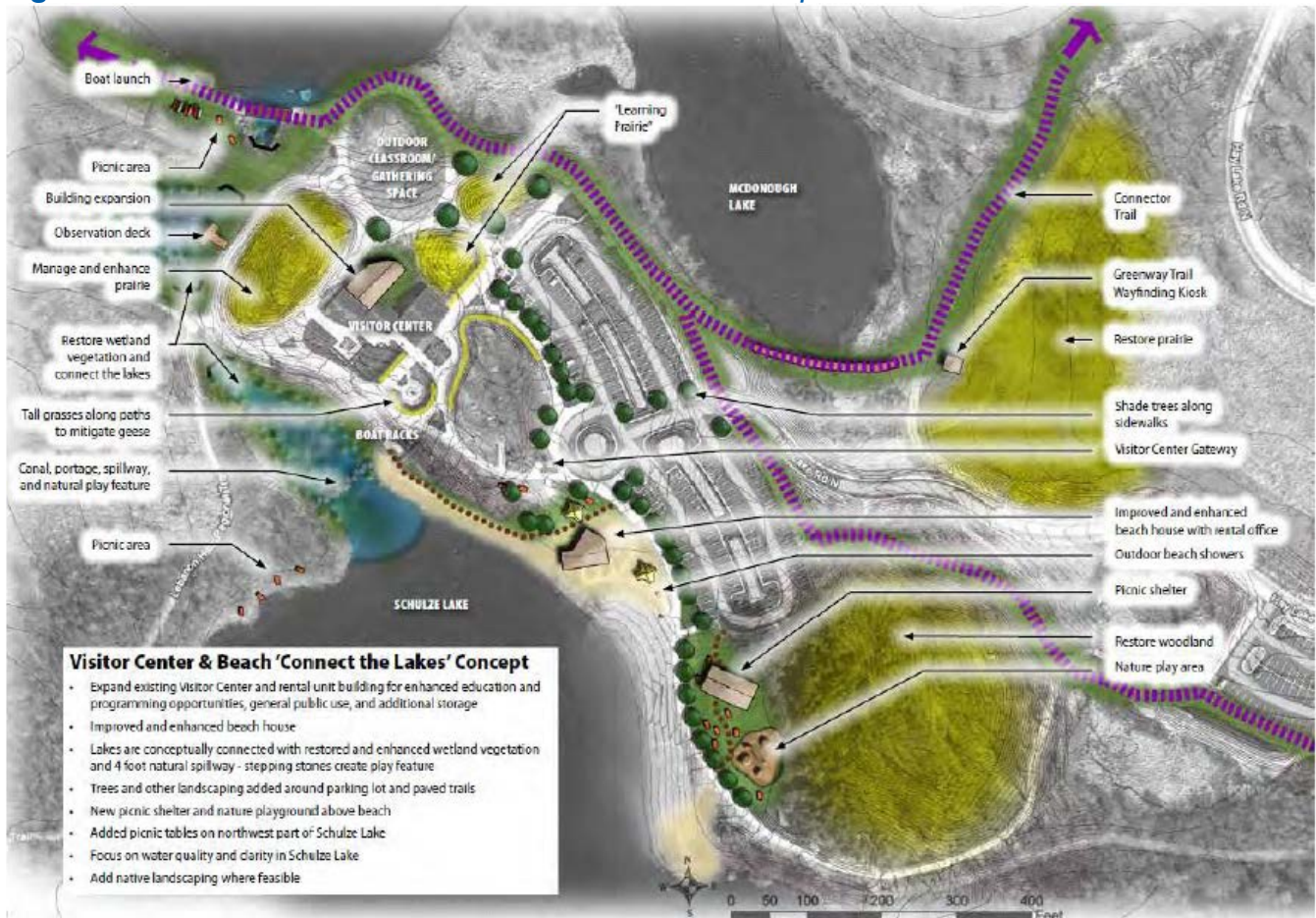
The proposed recreational development plans focus on improving or modestly expanding existing park destinations including the Visitor Center, trailheads, campground and Camp Sacajawea, as well as trails. The locations of the main recreational destinations in the regional park are labeled in Figure 1.

Visitor Center: Located between Schulze and McDonough lakes in the northeast portion of the park, the Visitor Center area is the most visited area of the park and currently includes a LEED certified visitor center, Schulze Lake beach and beach house, picnic grounds, nature displays, parking, trails, and sidewalks. The master plan proposes to:

- Visually connect McDonough and Schulze Lakes with restored wetlands, environmental learning and access to the water's edge
- Expand the Visitor Center and rental building for education, programming, public use and equipment storage,
- Improve the beach house
- Host more picnicking with a new shelter and scattered sites
- Expand the existing beach along the lakeshore
- Add opportunities to paddle McDonough Lake, with boat rental racks and a put-in location
- Add to the existing outdoor classroom/gathering space at the edge of McDonough Lake
- Add opportunities for a variety of play (nature, water, and open area) and benches throughout the campus

Estimated costs for the Visitor Center, including small-area stewardship projects associated with the development are \$1,961,400. Figure 4 shows the Visitor Center and Beach Concept.

Figure 4: Lebanon Hills Visitor Center and Beach Concept



Holland Lake: Holland Lake is located in the north-central portion of the park just south of Cliff Road and is a popular trailhead, picnic area, and fishing spot. The trailhead has a picnic shelter with restrooms, a lakeside deck, parking, and trails. Proposed improvements include:

- Improved amenities for shelter users, including a natural play area and a fire ring
- A larger pier to accommodate more lake-side visitors, people fishing, and programs
- Boat rental racks and a launch for non-motorized watercraft near the pier
- A rocky beach/shoreline to allow people to get closer to the water and sit and dip one's toes
- A small pier and bird observation blind in the northwest corner of the lake
- A soft surface loop trail around the lake using part of an abandoned driveway on the east side of the lake and part of the planned Connector Trail
- An ADA-accessible path from the trailhead parking area to the main pier
- New natural surface trails provide access to the shore

Figure 5 shows the Holland Lake Concept and Figure 6 shows the Holland Lake Loop Trail Concept. Estimated costs for the Holland Lake Concept, including small-area stewardship projects associated with the development are \$1,839,500.

Figure 5: Holland Lake Concept

Holland Lake Trailhead 'Enhanced Lake Access' Concept

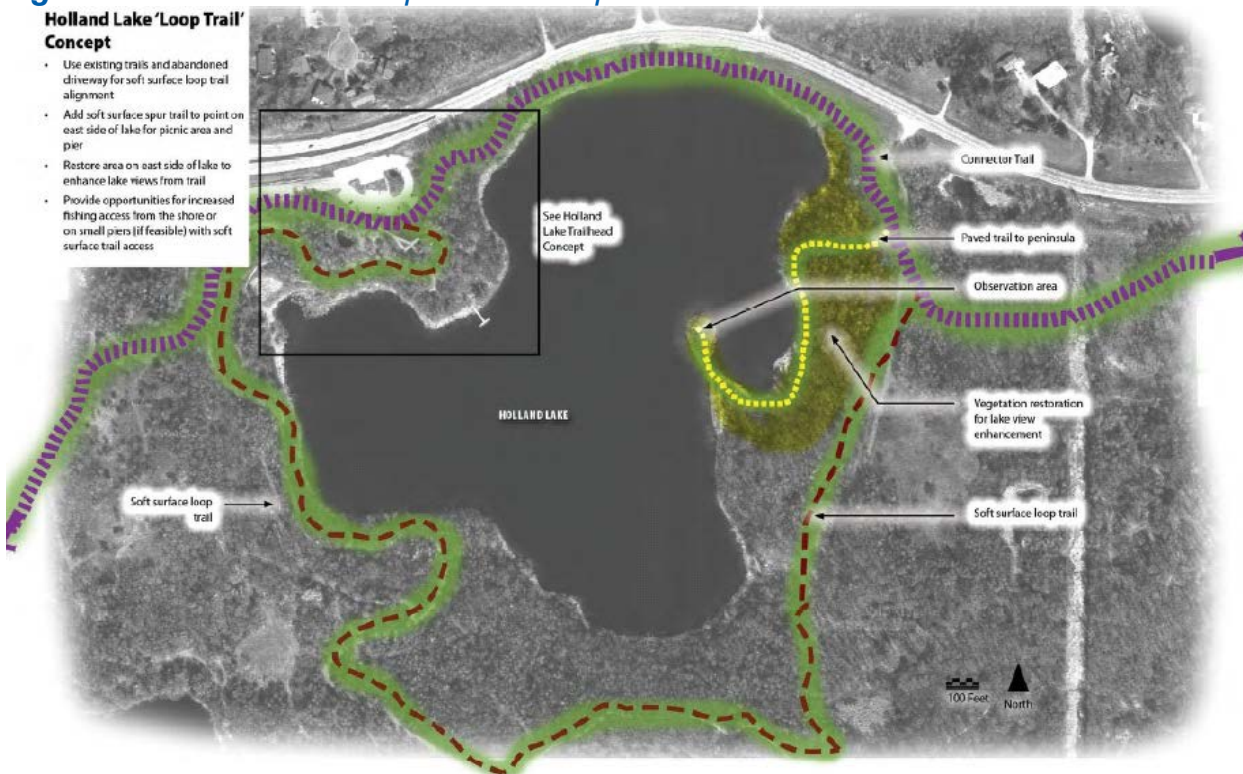
- Add fire ring below existing building
- Add natural play elements into slope down to lake
- Add picnic tables at lake's edge
- Expand existing pier to accommodate more visitors
- Provide ADA accessible trail to access the expanded pier
- Add public and rental boat racks near existing pier
- Add boat launch for non-motorized watercraft near existing pier
- Create rocky beach for getting closer to the water



Figure 6: Holland Lake Loop Trail Concept

Holland Lake 'Loop Trail' Concept

- Use existing trails and abandoned driveway for soft surface loop trail alignment
- Add soft surface spur trail to point on east side of lake for picnic area and pier
- Restore area on east side of lake to enhance lake views from trail
- Provide opportunities for increased fishing access from the shore or on small piers (if feasible) with soft surface trail access

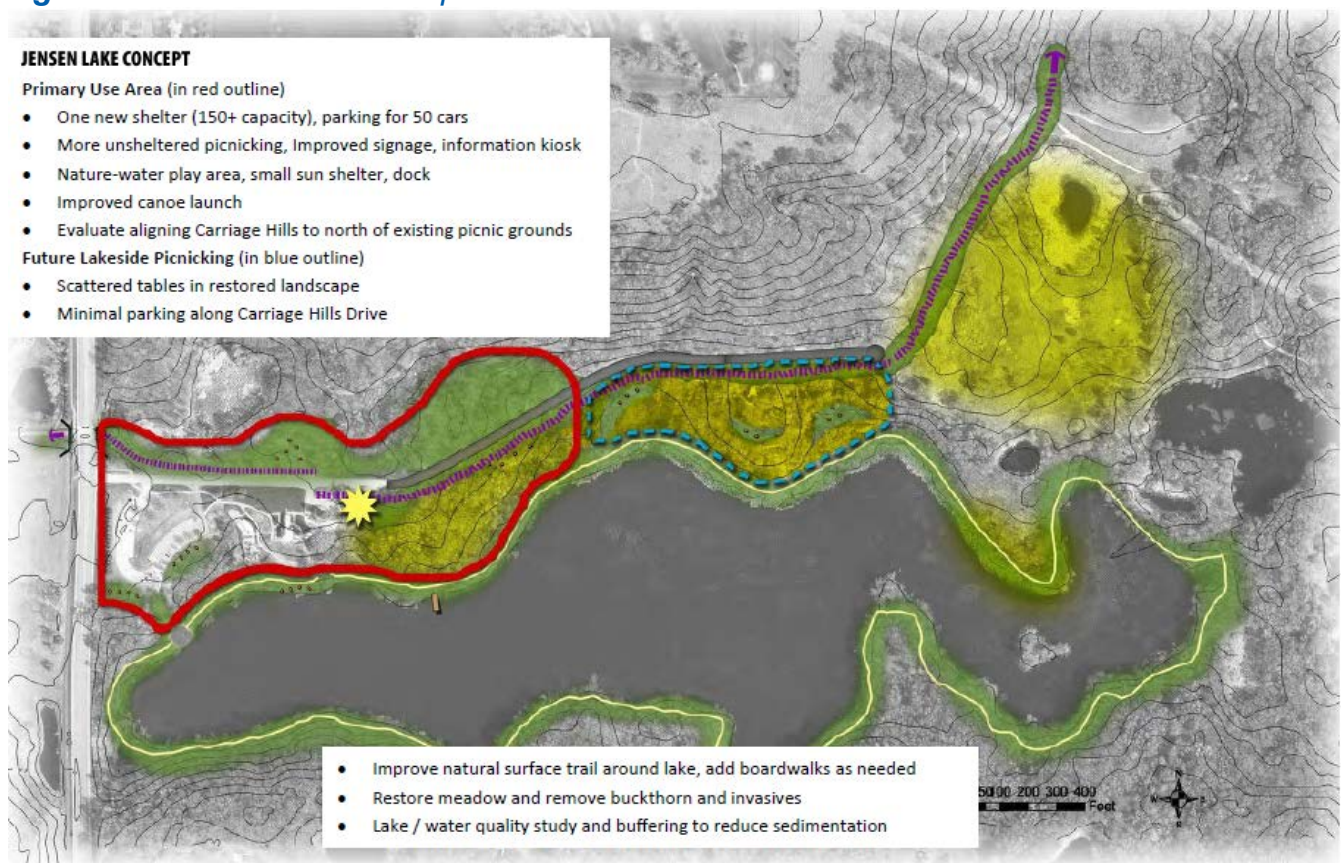


Jensen Lake: Jensen Lake is located in the central portion of the park, just east of Pilot Knob Road, and is a primary picnic area in the park. The Jensen picnic shelter accommodates 100 people under the roof and an additional 50 people on a patio area. The area also includes a north picnic grounds with unsheltered tables, a children’s playground, fire rings, a shoreline overlook and parking. Jensen Lake area serves as a trailhead with access to trails east and west of Pilot Knob Road, the popular Jensen Lake loop trail, and the canoe route between Jensen Lake and Schulze Lake. Proposed improvements include:

- A new picnic shelter with restrooms and parking near the existing shelter in the primary use area
- A small sun shelter and nature play area in the primary use area
- Scattered, simple picnic table sites along Carriage Hills Drive/Jensen Lake
- Completing boardwalks and improving the Jensen Lake natural surface loop trail
- Improving the canoe launch on the west side of lake

Figure 7 shows the Jensen Lake Concept. Estimated costs for the Jensen Lake Concept, including small-area stewardship projects associated with the development are \$1,839,500.

Figure 7: Jensen Lake Concept



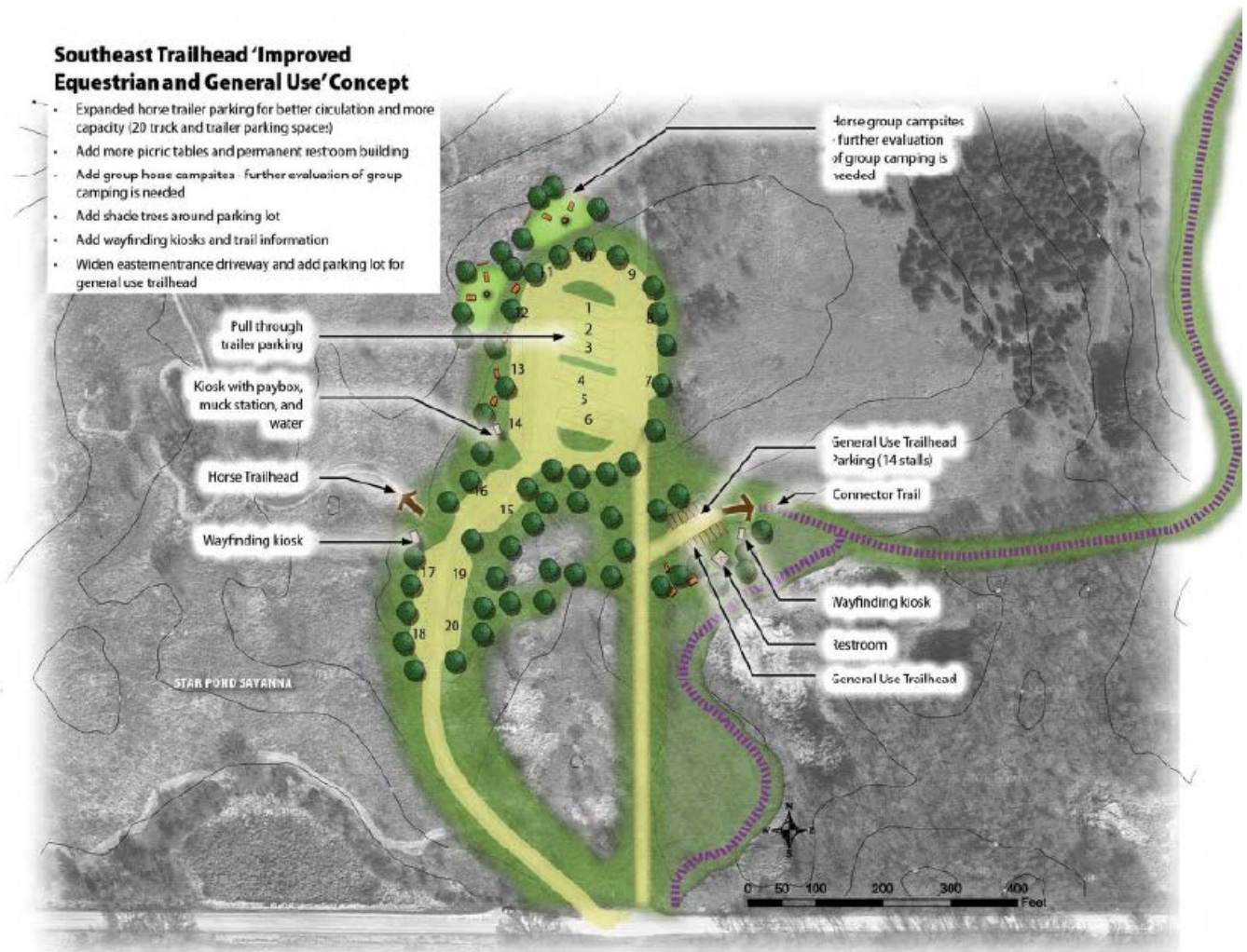
Southeast Trailhead: The existing trailhead located in the southeast portion of the park is used primarily by equestrians for access to horse trails. The trailhead has a gravel surface horse trailer parking lot, picnic tables, a portable toilet and a fire ring. The intent of the concept plan is to improve the trailhead for

equestrian use while adding basic trailhead facilities for visitors arriving from the south. Proposed improvements include:

- Expand the horse trailer parking lot for better circulation and capacity
- Add a gravel parking lot for general use and a permanent restroom building
- Add picnic tables and drinking water
- Add high tie lines, a muck station, and other amenities for equestrians
- Potentially add equestrian group campsites, with further discussion and refinement with equestrian groups
- Improve wayfinding kiosks and trail information

Figure 8 shows the Southeast Trailhead Concept. Estimated costs for the Visitor Center, including small-area stewardship projects associated with the development are \$507,600.

Figure 8: Southeast Trailhead Concept



Campground: The Lebanon Hills Campground is located in the west portion of the park, across Johnny Cake Ridge Road, and east from the Minnesota Zoo. The campground is popular because of its convenient location, facilities, and access to a natural setting. The campground includes an RV loop with water, sewer, and electrical services; an east loop with electrical service only; and a primitive north loop without utility hook ups. The campground has bathroom and shower facilities, a store, laundry, and a children’s playground. Proposed improvements include:

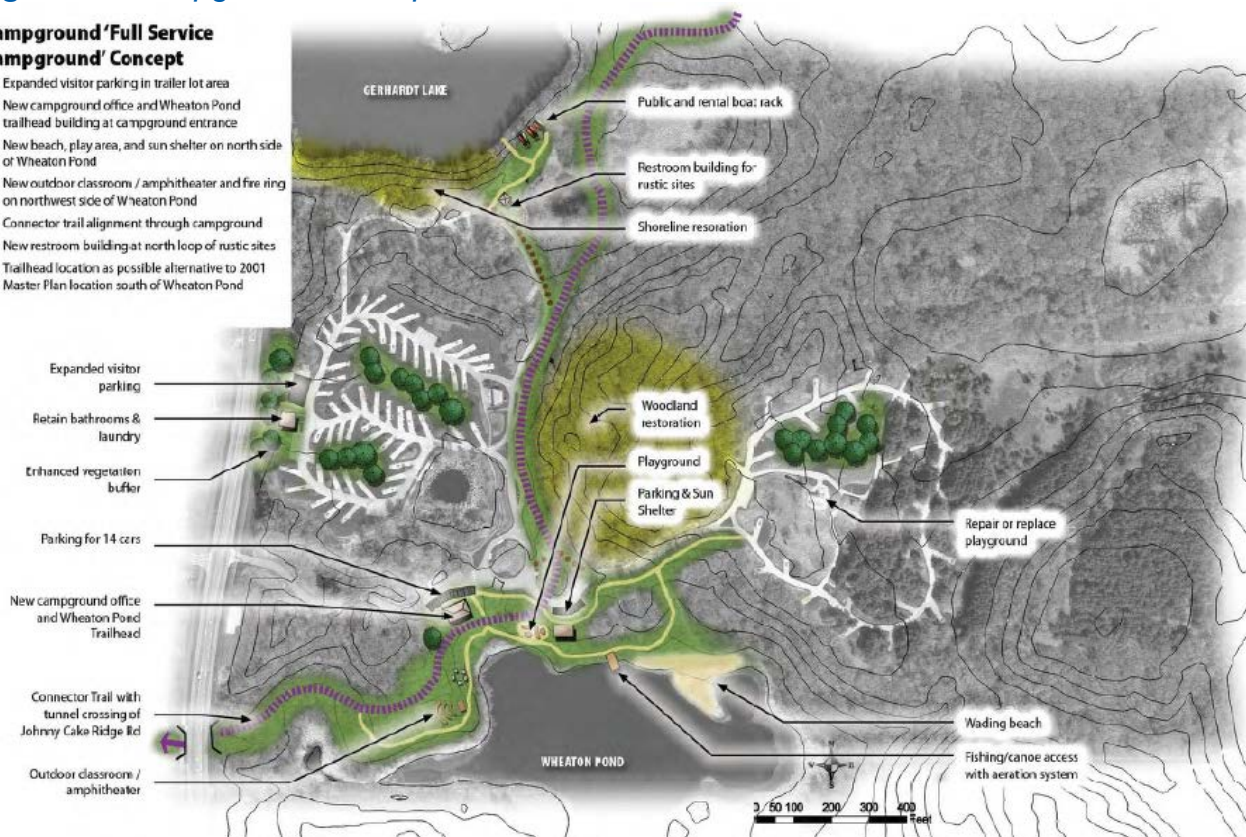
- New campground contact station and trailhead off the entry road, with a front office, small back office, utility room, restrooms, storage, winter warming space, and rental equipment, such as bicycles
- Visitor parking expansion
- New wading beach, play area, pier, boat rental docks, sun shelter, outdoor classroom, and fire ring on the north side of Wheaton Pond
- Connector trail access along the edge of the campground
- New restroom building serving north loop rustic sites

Figure 9 shows the Campground Concept. Estimated costs for the Campground Concept, including small-area stewardship projects associated with the development are \$2,111,375.

Figure 9: Campground Concept

Campground 'Full Service Campground' Concept

- Expanded visitor parking in trailer lot area
- New campground office and Wheaton Pond trailhead building at campground entrance
- New beach, play area, and sun shelter on north side of Wheaton Pond
- New outdoor classroom / amphitheater and fire ring on northwest side of Wheaton Pond
- Connector trail alignment through campground
- New restroom building at north loop of rustic sites
- Trailhead location as possible alternative to 2001 Master Plan location south of Wheaton Pond



Camp Sacajawea: Camp Sacajawea is located in the south portion of the park, just west of Pilot Knob Road. Camp Sacajawea is a reserved-use retreat center with a small lodge that accommodates 50 people, group camp, adventure skills course, outdoor classroom, parking, and trails. The planned improvements would improve its capacity as a full-service retreat center, by:

- Updating and expanding the Lodge with a larger gathering room, improved kitchen and storage space, a porch, and exterior-access restrooms
- Adding an outdoor gathering area and fire ring by the Lodge
- Potentially adding three bunkhouses south of the Lodge in the future
- Improving the group camp with a common shelter and cooking areas at each site
- Formalizing nature trails in the area using sustainable design, complete a paved trail between the classroom and Lodge, and add a link to the Connector Trail
- Updating and enhancing the adventure course

However, the master plan recommends the following additional evaluation before any improvements are undertaken:

- 1) Market and level of service analyses to better define the roles of retreat centers in Dakota County Parks.
- 2) Further study should be done in relocating the maintenance facility and possibly relocating Camp Sacajawea to the current maintenance site or elsewhere in the park. The current Camp Sacajawea site lacks lake access, limiting recreation options for visitors. The 2001 master plan called for the relocation of the Parks maintenance facility from O'Brien Lake to the northeast corner of the park. The O'Brien Lake site is highly scenic and could provide a better location for Camp Sacajawea.
- 3) The County is evaluating its maintenance operations and this study may influence the level of park-based maintenance infrastructure that is needed at Lebanon Hills.

Figure 10 shows the Camp Sacajawea Concept. Estimated costs for the Camp Sacajawea Concept, including small-area stewardship projects associated with the development are \$1,482,300.

Figure 10: Camp Sacajawea Concept



West Trailhead: The West Trailhead serves the mountain bike, cross country ski, and hiking trails west of Johnny Cake Ridge Road. The Lebanon Hills mountain bike trails are among the most popular in Minnesota.

A new trailhead building with restrooms, paved parking lot, and mountain bike skills course was just constructed in 2012, so proposed enhancements to the trailhead are minor and mostly in response to the popularity of this area. Proposed improvements include:

- Improving the former gravel parking area
- Enhancing the area east of new parking lot for event use
- Adding picnic tables to the west of the new parking lot
- Continuing to work with MORC (Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists) in general enhancements
- Resolving emerging issues with traffic flow through the site, potentially adding a trail link from parking to the course around the buildings

Figure 11 shows the West Trailhead Concept. Estimated costs for the West Trailhead Concept, including small-area stewardship projects associated with the development are \$184,250.

Figure 11: West Trailhead Concept



Maintenance facility: The maintenance facility is Dakota County's northern base for park maintenance operations and currently serves Lebanon Hills, Big Rivers Regional Trail, and Thompson County Park. The facility is located in a highly scenic natural area that would be best used for open space, visitor, and trail purposes. The master plan indicates that the new facility should be sited to provide efficient access to park use areas, roads that access the park, and other areas covered by the maintenance facility. The new location should minimize interference with other park uses, be of lower ecological value, and be designed

to minimize adverse impact. The new location should accommodate sufficient security, including control of the entry. Room for potential future expansion is also desirable.

Based on the above criteria, the 2001 Master Plan recommended a location in the northeast corner of the park, off the relocated park entrance road. The final location for this facility will require additional evaluation to ensure that it still meets the siting criteria and does not detract from the main park entrance experience.

Portage Canoe Course: Lebanon Hills Regional Park offers a portage trail canoe course, which provides a wilderness experience with 2.6 miles of water trail through nine lakes and ponds connected by portages. The master plan proposes to keep a rustic approach to the course and providing clear, yet unobtrusive, signage. The estimated cost for site preparation and basic amenities is \$47,700.

Trails: Trails are a defining feature of Lebanon Hills Regional Park and are almost exclusively natural surface trails. The master plan proposes improvements to soft surface trails. In the east park, new hiking links will be added around Holland Lake, and in prairie and restored savanna areas. Some equestrian trail segments in the southeast park will become shared soft-surface equestrian-hiking trails to bring hikers to scenic areas that are currently inaccessible.

Sustainably-designed loops will be created in the middle park, some designed to be shared by both equestrians and hikers. New trails are planned for the campground and Camp Sacajawea, where unmarked informal trails now exist. A dead-end equestrian trail in the middle park is eliminated, replaced with a new more sustainable loop.

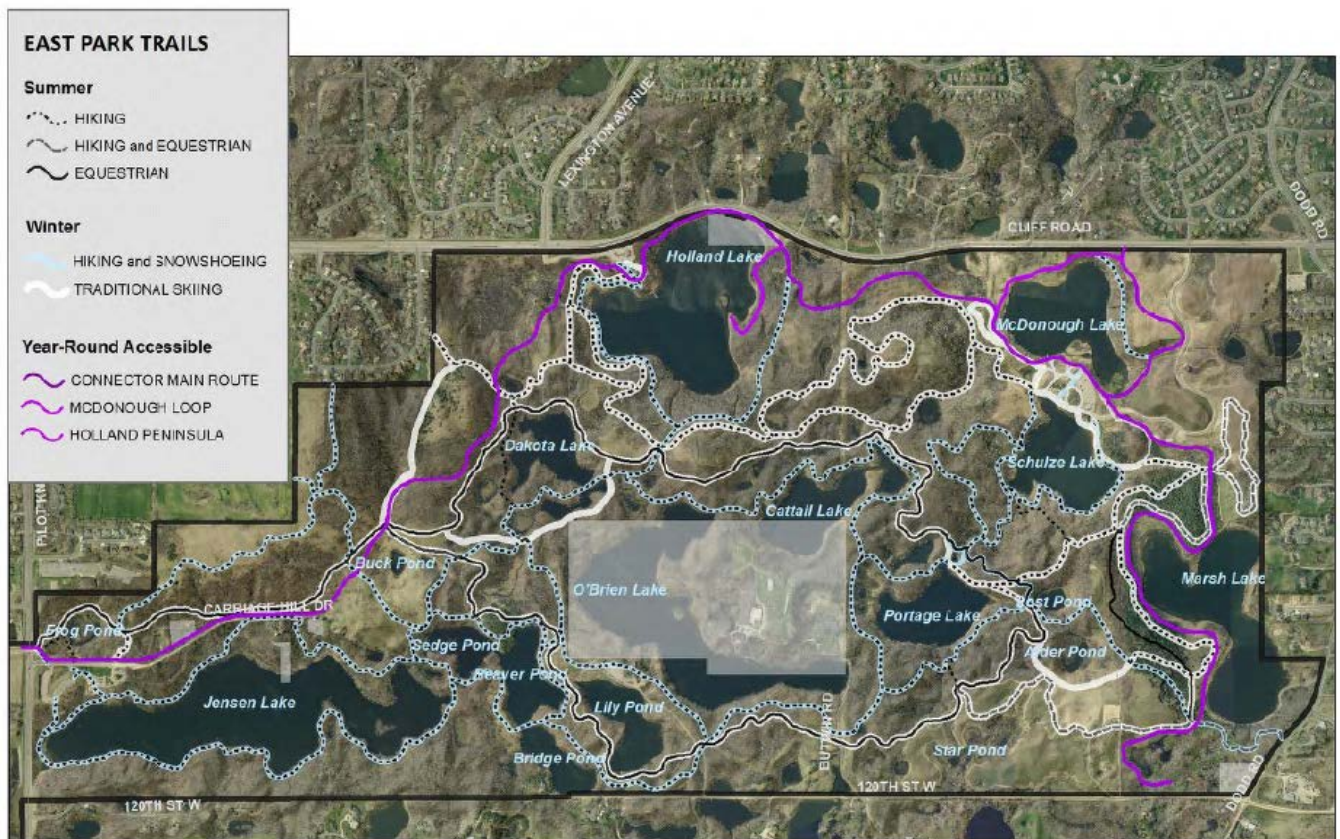
A 6-mile paved Connector Trail is also proposed to improve accessibility and connectivity within the regional park. The Connector Trail will link the park's main recreation destinations with a stable-surface, multi-use, all-season trail. Although not typically part of a master planning process, Dakota County conducted pre-engineering studies of the Connector route to ensure that it can meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) trail standards. The Visitor Center will serve as the primary Connector trailhead with amenities including parking, water, restrooms, and orientation. Other destinations will also function as trailheads for park trails, and the Connector Trail. The Connector route follows terrain and minimizes conflicts with existing trails.

The Connector Trail is generally closer to the park perimeter, except in locations where it would conflict with existing trails or have greater impact on more sensitive natural resources. The nature trail system and the Connector together can provide additional loops and new trail experiences.

The master plan describes the trails in three sections of the regional park: the east park, middle park, and west park.

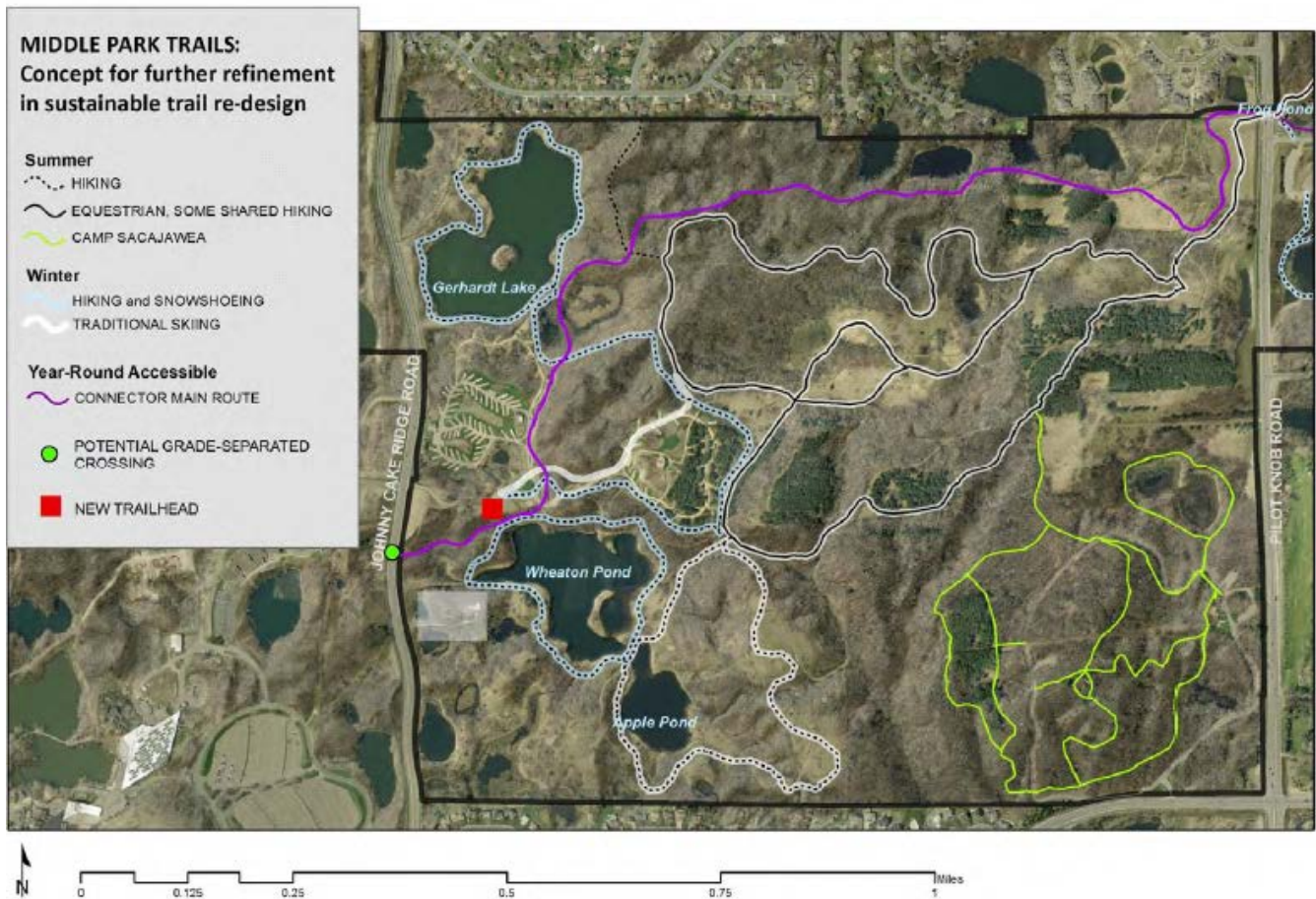
East Park Trails: At the east portion of the park, a paved loop around McDonough Lake near the Visitor Center will provide more walking options for stroller and wheelchair users, while increasing visitor’s access to the lake. In this portion of the regional park, the Connector Trail passes through the northern edge, from the Cliff Road entrance, to the Visitor Center, Holland Lake, Jensen Lake picnic area and the Pilot Knob Road underpass. The Connector passes through previously disturbed areas and minimizes crossings with ski trails. The original draft master plan called for a paved loop around Holland Lake. However, a 2014 Citizen Panel, described in the Citizen Participation section of this report beginning on page 21, reached consensus on a .5 mile ADA-accessible spur off the Connector Trail that provides access to a scenic peninsula on the east side of Holland Lake, rather than a paved trail around the entire lake. New soft-surface trails are proposed in the prairie area north of Jensen Lake. New trail segments would create loops around Dakota Lake as well as Beaver and Lily ponds. Figure 12 shows the east park trails. The paved Connector Trail and Spur are shown in purple. All other trails will be soft surface.

Figure 12: East Park Trails



Middle Park Trails: The trail plan for the park’s middle section addresses the lack of hiking loops and the erodible condition of all existing trails, and adds the Connector Trail in a short direct route across this park section. A sustainable trail re-design is proposed for the middle park. Figure 13 shows the middle park trails. The paved Connector Trail is shown in purple. All other trails will be soft surface.

Figure 13: Middle Park Trails



West Park Trails: The west park is mostly for mountain biking. The Lebanon Hills course is regarded as one of the best in the Twin Cities. Hiking loops and a separate skate ski trail co-exist with the network of biking trails. The existing hiking trails are not configured based on sustainable trail design principles, and are subject to erosion as they cross over hills rather than hugging contours. Skate skiing is a minor use at Lebanon Hills and the existing course is highly challenging. The plans for the west park trails include continuing to work with MORC on management and improvement of the mountain bike trail as well as other west park trails, enhancing the hiking trail, and further evaluating improvement needs and use of the ski skate trail. The west park trails are depicted in Figure 14. No paved trails are planned for this portion of the regional park.

Figure 14: West Park Trails



The master plan describes the character and design standards for the various types of trails within Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It should be noted that the Connector Trail was originally proposed to be 10 feet wide and designed for speeds of 20 mph, but the Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted the master plan with the following modifications regarding the Connector Trail:

- Strike language throughout the document regarding a 20 mph design speed for the connector trail
- Removal of Greenway language when speaking about the connector trail within the park; Greenway is to come to the park but not through the park
- Reduce width of connector trail to eight feet throughout document
- Replace the term "bikeway" with "connector trail" in sections of the document referring to the connector trail

The master plan proposes a net increase of 3 miles of soft surface summer use trails, 3.5 miles of winter use trails, and 6.5 miles of paved all-season trails, which include the Connector Trail and Holland Lake Spur. Figure 15 shows the current, proposed, and net miles of trails by season.

Figure 15: Existing and Planned Trails by Season

TRAIL TYPE/USE	CURRENT MILES	PROPOSED MILES	NET CHANGE MILES
Summer Use, soft surface	40.0	43.0	+ 3.0
Winter Use	32.3	35.8	+ 3.5
Connector and Lake Loops	0	6.5	+ 6.5

The estimated development cost for the trails and associated amenities is \$3,966,200.

Conflicts

Approximately 80 percent of the land adjacent to Lebanon Hills Regional Park consists of single family residential neighborhoods and high and low volume roadways. Up to 20 percent of the adjacent land could see future development, either from a change in housing density or unpaved rural roads becoming paved urban roads. The area that presents the greatest opportunity for change is along the southeast corner of the park in Rosemount.

The Minnesota Zoo and Valleywood Golf Course are the primary large open spaces that border the park. The former Parkview Golf Course that was adjacent to the north end of the park is currently being redeveloped for residential uses.

Visual screening and buffering is desirable in locations where park trails or facilities are close to the park boundary and there is little to no screening on the adjacent private property.

The creation of unofficial park access trails, physical encroachments, and after-hours park use can occur in park areas that are close residential neighborhoods. Dakota County generally relies on clear boundary signage and enforcement. In select situations, a physical barrier such as a fence may be warranted. This also applies to informal foot paths that can cause maintenance and access control concerns.

A network of local and county roads provides vehicular access to the park, but also impact wildlife, habitat, and human use. Johnny Cake Ridge Road and Pilot Knob Road run north-south through the park, dividing it into three sections and creating barriers to human and wildlife movement. An existing underpass at Pilot Knob Road facilitates connectivity between the east and middle sections of the park. The master plan recommends a grade-separated trail crossing of Johnny Cake Ridge Road to safely connect the middle and west sections of the park.

Noise from high speed/high traffic volume roads is apparent within the park. The master plan recommends noise buffering through the use of native plants and earth berms for:

- East side of Johnny Cake Ridge Road next to the campground
- West side of Pilot Knob Road by the Camp Sacajawea Lodge
- East side of Pilot Knob Road near the Jensen Lake trailhead
- South edge of Cliff Road at Holland Lake
- South edge of Cliff Road at McDonough Lake

Vehicular access to the park at Cliff Road, Pilot Knob Road, and Johnny Cake Ridge Road occurs mostly at uncontrolled intersections, with the exception of a signalized access at the intersection of Lexington Avenue and Cliff Road. The master plan recommends evaluation of improvements at the intersection of the main park entrance road and Cliff Road when park traffic increases or in conjunction with the planned expansion of Cliff Road west of Lexington Avenue.

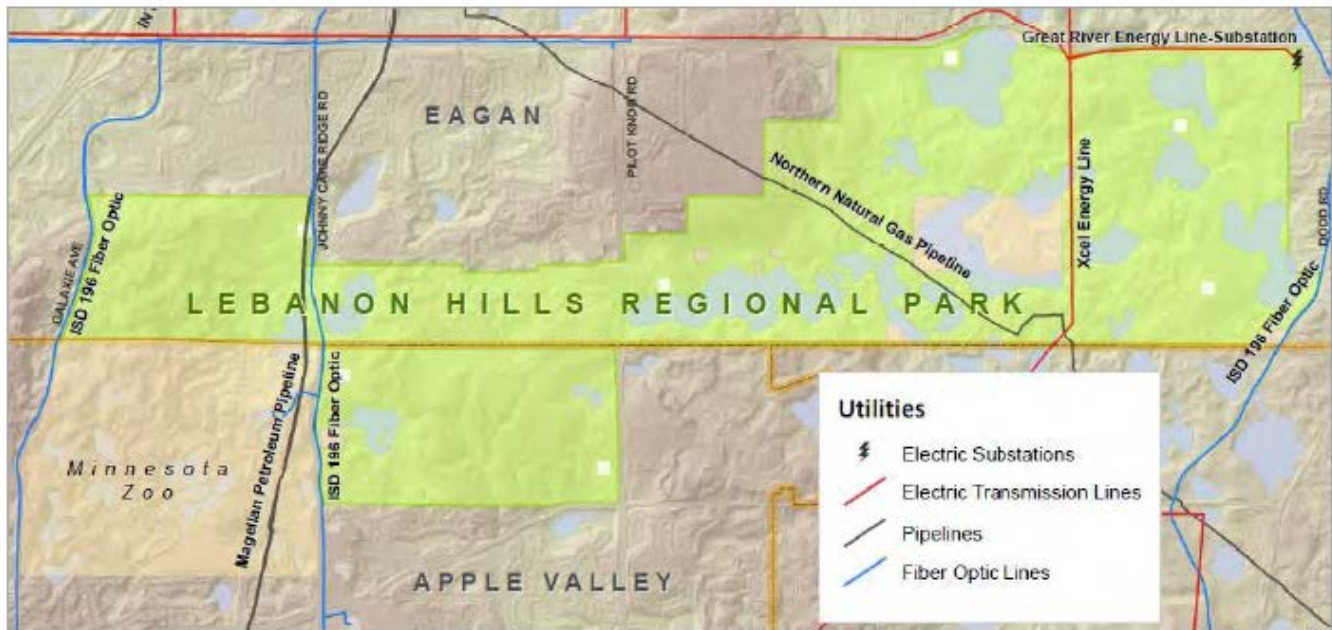
Public Services

Natural gas and petroleum pipelines cross Lebanon Hills Regional Park and have impacts to the park landscapes. There can be limitations on the type of park facilities that can cross or be adjacent the line, depending on the type of line and safety requirements. The eastern portion of the park is traversed by the Northern Natural Gas Company's Rosemount Junction to Minneapolis line, which runs diagonally through the park. Northern Natural Gas maintains its pipeline easement to be free of trees and other tall woody vegetation. Magellan Pipeline Company operates a petroleum pipeline that runs north-south across the western portion of the park, near the West Trailhead. This corridor is kept free of large woody vegetation, with limits on the types of structures than can cross or be on top of the line.

Power lines run north-south through the eastern portion of the park. Xcel Energy maintains the easement corridor to be clear of trees and other woody vegetation. Great River Energy operates an overhead power line on the Cliff Road edge of the eastern portion of the park as well as a substation sited along the northeast portion of the park.

Fiber optic lines owned by Independent School District 196 run along the park boundaries under Dodd Road, Johnny Cake Ridge Road, and Galaxie Avenue. The Lebanon Hills campground is served by one of the lines. Figure 16 shows the electric substation, pipelines, power lines, and fiber optic lines that run through or adjacent to the regional park.

Figure 16: Utility Lines within and adjacent to Lebanon Hills Regional Park



Sanitary sewer: The Visitor Center campus, Holland Trailhead, Campground, Jensen Trailhead, and West Trailhead are on city sanitary sewer service. The remaining park facilities currently have septic systems.

Water: The Visitor Center campus, Campground, Camp Sacajawea, Jensen Trailhead, and West Trailhead are on city water service.

Stormwater: Portions of the park receive surface water drainage from outside the park. The master plan indicates that it is important to maintain viable ecological buffers along the park edge to slow down stormwater runoff, capture micro-nutrients, and infiltrate surface water before it reaches water bodies

within the park. It is also important for the County to continue to work with cities and the watershed district to address stormwater before it enters the park.

Utility service needs: New public service and utility needs will likely be minimal, and mostly related to the relocation of the park maintenance facility. Expansion of the picnic area at Jensen Lake will require extension of utility services from the existing developed area. Expansion of the southeast equestrian trailhead area to include amenities, including restrooms, will likely rely on a septic system and well.

Operations

The Dakota County park system is governed by Ordinance No. 107, which was adopted by the County Board of Commissioners on June 3, 1997. The Ordinance addresses public use; general conduct; general parkland operation; protection of property, structures, and natural resources; recreation activity; and motorized vehicles, traffic, and parking.

Administration oversees all park operations, budgeting, staffing and capital facility development. The Parks Director has direct oversight of primary business units including Visitor Services, Capital Facility Development, and Natural Resources.

Visitor Services manages recreation provision, outdoor education, events, rentals, and reservations. Rentals throughout the year include canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards in summer, as well as cross country skis, kick sleds, and snowshoes in winter. Several venues can be rented for private events, including Camp Sacajawea Retreat Center, two picnic shelters and lakeside deck, and the Discovery Room within the Visitor Center.

Dakota County's Outdoor Education Program is based out of the Lebanon Hills Visitor Center. The program includes parent and child fishing events, kayak and canoe lessons, prairie hikes, stargazing, cross country skiing, and moonlight snowshoe hikes. An Outdoor Education Coordinator plans and oversees outdoor education programming in the parks. In the past decade, the program has generated more than \$275,000 in revenue, while providing free or low-cost activities for families.

The Facilities Management Director oversees a staff of 14 permanent employees and 18 seasonal staff for maintenance, including

- Building and public restroom custodial services
- Rental facility custodial and setup services
- Snow removal & trail grooming
- Shelter rental custodial and setup services
- Collection of trash and recycling
- Natural resource maintenance
- Preventive maintenance and repairs of park infrastructure and equipment
- Deferred maintenance
- Assisting other departments and service areas with events, programs, and projects
- Capital improvement program assistance
- Grounds maintenance
- Emergency response

Signs and kiosks throughout the park provide information to visitors about park hours, trails, permitted and prohibited activities, fees, and directions. The Dakota County Sheriff's Office educates visitors, enforces the Ordinance when necessary, and patrols the park. A volunteer ski patrol maintains a presence on the ski trails. Local law enforcement and the Sheriff's Department respond to emergencies and criminal complaints.

The 2015 Operations Budget for Visitor Services, Natural Resources and Maintenance totals \$3,832,876 of which \$1,400,087 is estimated for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It is estimated an additional \$704,622 is needed to fund operational expenses associated with the proposed improvements within the master plan. The predominant revenue source for operational expenses is from Dakota County funds. Revenue is also received from the State of Minnesota as part of the Operations and Maintenance Fund allocation administered by the Metropolitan Council

2015 revenues generated from fee-based facilities and services at Lebanon Hills Regional Park are estimated to total \$397,830, as follows:

- Campground	\$255,400
- Camp Sacajawea Rental	\$ 22,000
- Visitor Center Building Rental	\$ 5,500
- Visitor Center Equipment Rental	\$ 45,000
- Outdoor Education	\$ 29,750
- Special Permits	\$ 1,250
- Picnic Shelter Rental	\$ 13,930
- Equestrian Trail Pass	\$ 2,500
- Cross Country Ski Pass	\$ 22,500

Citizen Participation

As part of the preparation of the master plan, Dakota County solicited feedback from the public through a number of methods, including a questionnaire, surveys, focus groups, and open houses.

Questionnaire: The County initiated planning for the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan in 2012 with an online open questionnaire/survey, which received 492 responses. The survey drew strongly from current users and several specialized recreation interest groups. The natural character of the park was identified as its single most important asset. The two survey elements that evoked the strongest positive response were the scenic qualities of the park and its extensive soft surface trails for hiking and trail running. The three user groups that weighed in strongly on the survey were mountain bikers, trail hikers/runners, and equestrians.

Surveys: The 2013 Dakota County Resident Survey was scientifically sampled and provided a statistically representative snapshot of County resident opinions. The survey asked residents about the importance of eight activities and services in the County's parks, with the three highest ranking responses being (in order):

1. Protecting/restoring woods, prairies, lakes, ponds, and wetlands
2. Trail networks for hiking, biking, or skiing
3. Gathering spaces in picnic grounds and shelters

Results from the 2008 Dakota County Resident Survey indicated that respondents enjoy the natural setting and convenient location of the County's parks (81.7 percent and 70.1 percent, respectively). When

asked about trails people would like to use in the County's parks, 87.5 percent chose hiking/walking trails, 72.2 percent chose loop trails around lakes, and 51.3 percent chose paved trails.

Picnicking in shelters was important to 75.3 percent of respondents and 68.4 percent said their preferred direction for the Dakota County Park System was to keep parks mostly natural, but add more facilities for physical activities such as hiking, canoeing, and skiing.

The 2005 Park Master Plan Survey that was conducted for three parks, including Miesville Ravine Park Reserve, Lake Byllesby Regional Park and Thompson County Park indicated that the top five activities that respondents would like to do in Dakota County Parks are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Hiking/walking | 80% |
| 2. Loop trails around a lake | 66% |
| 3. Picnicking/open tables | 63% |
| 4. Visit natural area | 62% |
| 5. Festivals or concerts | 58% (tie with biking on paved trails) |
| 5. Biking on paved trails | 58% (tie with festivals) -- 46% of respondents identified paved trails as clearly lacking |

Focus Group Sessions: Small focus group sessions with various groups were held in July 2012 to gather information on how the groups use the park, any negative issues they encounter, and opportunities for improving the park or their activities. Focus group sessions were held with staff from Apple Valley, Eagan, and Rosemount; mountain bikers; equestrians; general trail users; and naturalists.

Open Houses: Open houses were held during the project research phase; with presentation of draft park concepts; and twice after releasing the draft plan for public comment and review. The master plan provided a link to the comments received during the open house. The master plan generated a lot of controversy; many comments were received related to concerns regarding the Connector Trail.

Citizen Panel: After the draft plan public review and comment period closed in January 2014, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners responded to public comments by forming a Citizen Panel to further review and comment on the draft plan. The Board passed a resolution directing a Citizen Panel to review and comment on sections on natural resources, trails, and recreational user areas. Prospective Panel members applied for to be appointed by the County Board to the twenty-member body. Each of the seven County Board members appointed two panel members, with the balance of the panel appointed at-large. Panel members were selected to represent a diversity of interests and backgrounds, encompassing existing park users, potential park users, natural resource protection, and accessibility interests. The panel met ten times between May and December 2014. As directed by the Board, the Panel reported *consensus* comments (areas of general agreement, not necessarily unanimity) as well as areas where no consensus was reached and the reasons why, when possible.

In discussing an overarching philosophy for Lebanon Hills, the Citizen Panel developed and tested several statements to further define what kind of a park Lebanon Hills should be in the future and how the balance of natural resource preservation and recreation provision at Lebanon Hills could be struck. The following represent consensus statements of the Panel, meaning that most Panel members support or could accept each statement, and no more than two Panel members disagreed with the statement.

1. It is important to improve Lebanon Hills' natural resources and optimize public use and benefit.
2. Lebanon Hills should provide basic recreation that County residents seek elsewhere now, such as easy walking, jogging, ADA-accessible trails, and recreation biking for all ages and abilities.
3. The plan should offer new recreation opportunities while not displacing existing users.

4. The plan should accommodate popular uses.
5. Natural resource restoration should be funded at a level that will reverse the current downward trend in the quality of the park's natural resources and achieve a sustainable landscape quality. Performance metrics should be developed and applied to ensure progress toward this goal.
6. Ecological stewardship is recognized as a top priority by the 2014 Citizen Panel. Guidelines for funding and implementation of project categories must be established which will assure ecological stewardship will be funded and implemented in a manner which will reverse the downward trend of natural resources in Lebanon Hills.

The Citizen Panel final report was published January 7, 2015 and presented to the Dakota County Board of Commissioners. The final report was included in the master plan submitted to the Council.

The Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted the master plan on March 17, 2015 subject to modifications, as shown in Attachment A. A local organization, Wilderness in the City, distributed flyers encouraging people to submit comments to the Metropolitan Council, as shown in Attachment C. As of July 22, 2015, the Metropolitan Council received 144 comment statements in opposition to the master plan, one comment statement of clarification and two comment statements in support of the master plan which are included in Attachments B. These comments show that many people are passionate about Lebanon Hills Regional Park.

Many of the concerns expressed in comments sent to the Council were related to the planned paved trail and its potential impact on the natural character of the regional park. Several comments expressed displeasure with the Dakota County approval process. Numerous comments were based on misinformation, such as people believing that horse trails were going to be paved, with only a few miles of horse trails remaining and that the paved trail would go through the middle of the park, rather than near the periphery of the park.

Council staff responded to comments it received by describing that the Council's role in the review of the master plan plans is to ensure that the master plan is consistent with the Regional Parks Policy Plan and Council policies, and does not negatively impact the Council's other systems—Transportation, Aviation, and Wastewater Services. As long as the master plan meets the criteria in the Regional Parks Policy Plan, the type of development within a regional park is determined through the regional park implementing agency's master planning process and subsequent approval by its governing board.

The *2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan* requires that with regard to citizen participation, the master plan must include:

“A process to involve affected municipalities and the general public in the master planning. The process must include, but not be limited to, timely notice to the affected municipality with the opportunity for the public to be heard. The master plan should include a summary of comment received, with emphasis on issues raised.”

The process conducted by Dakota County as described in this section satisfies this requirement.

Public Awareness

Dakota County promotes its park system through a number of methods, including a semi-annual newsletter that is mailed to every household in the County, its website, a listserv that has more than 2,000 subscribers, a Facebook page, and news releases. The findings from research that was conducted for the County's 2008 Park System Plan indicate that many County residents were unaware of the park system

and its services. In response, Dakota County developed a marketing strategy and a “Forever Wild” brand for its parks to raise awareness and recognition of the system. The County also prepares an annual internal parks communication plan to ensure that the public receives timely updates on park-related topics and major events.

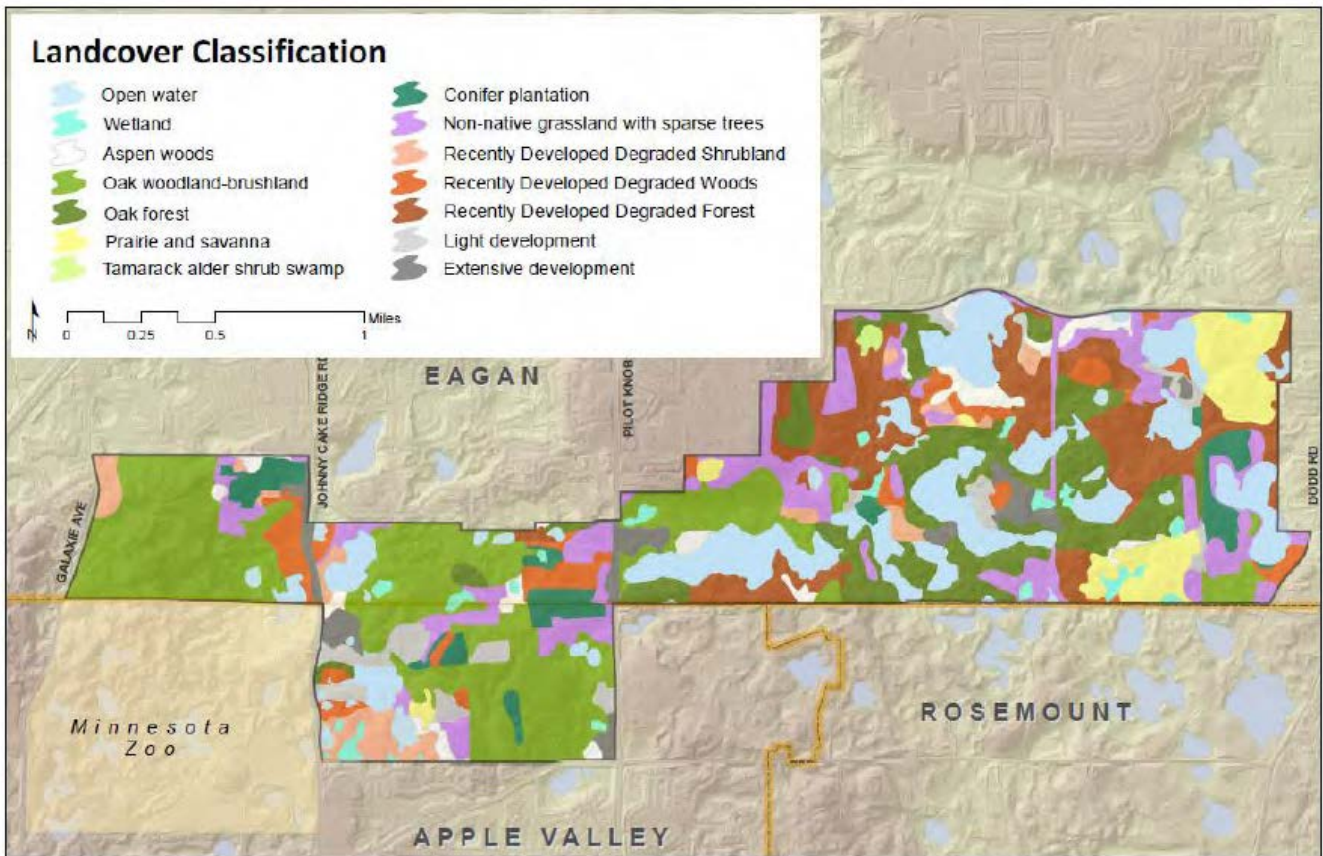
Accessibility

The master plan indicates that Dakota County recognizes the need to provide high-quality recreation opportunities to all visitors, regardless of their physical abilities. Existing visitor destinations within the park, such as the Visitor Center and campgrounds, all have been designed and built to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The master plan recommends ADA-compliant design and construction for two new lake loops and the connector trail, which will link seven visitor destination areas within the park that are ADA compliant. The master plan also recommends that Dakota County monitor the development of new standards for ADA-accessible trails.

Natural Resources

Lebanon Hills Regional Park is set within a glacial moraine landscape, characterized by steep irregular hills and pocket lakes and wetlands. Lebanon Hills has more than 120 water basins, with 13 lakes and ponds each covering more than 10 acres. Dozens of small ponds also are found throughout the park. Dominant vegetation patterns include grasslands, mixed woodlands, and forest with a large number of red oaks. Much of the park was formerly farmland and the resulting vegetation is a mix of native, successional, volunteer, and invasive species. Figure 17 shows the land cover classification of the park.

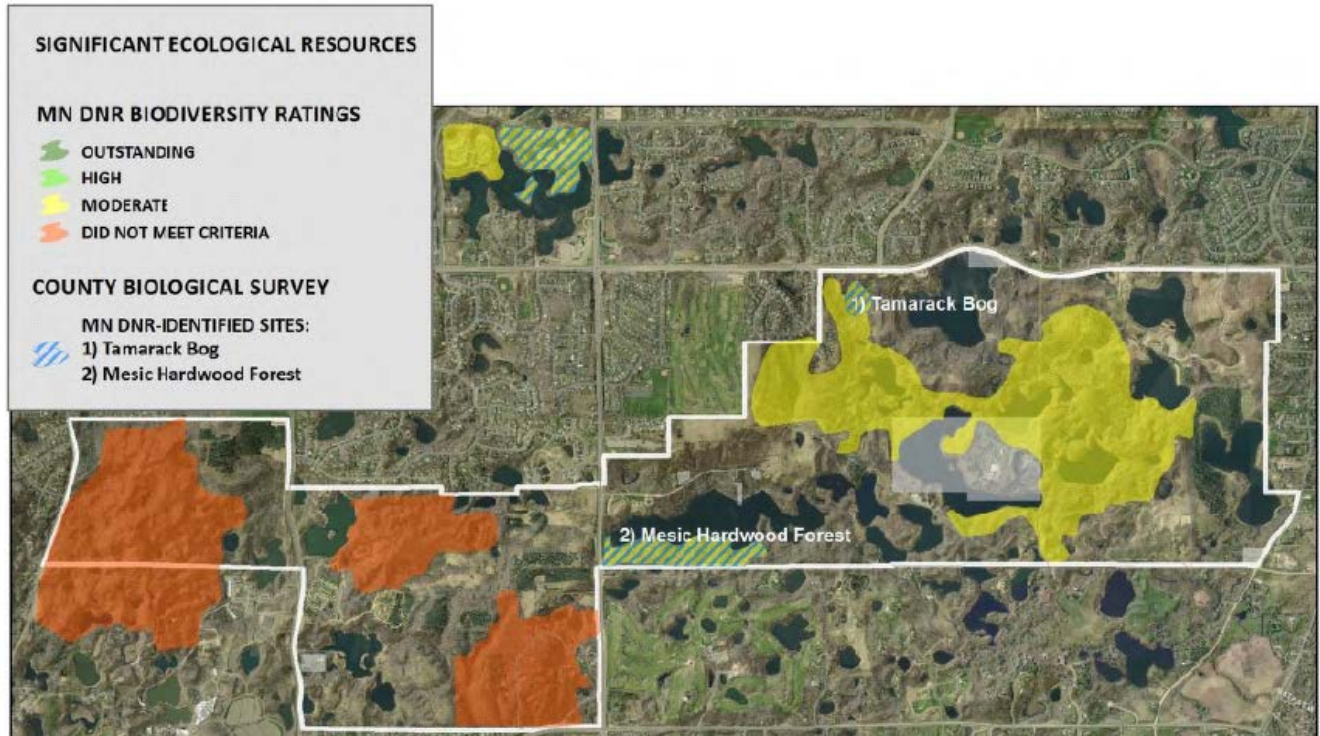
Figure 17: Lebanon Hills Regional Park Land Cover Classification



The master plan contains extensive information on the natural assets within the park including the woodland and forest, upland prairie and grassland, and aquatic systems, as well as a discussion of wildlife and habitat quality.

Lebanon Hills has two areas on the County Biological Survey, including a tamarack bog west of Holland Lake and the Mesic Hardwood Forest south of Jensen Lake. Both are significant features, but are in degraded condition. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has inventoried and characterized natural areas and resource quality throughout the state. In terms of natural area biodiversity, Lebanon Hills includes an area of moderate quality in its eastern sections and areas of initial interest in the middle and west portions of the park, which did not meet criteria upon further evaluation. Lebanon Hills include no areas of high or outstanding biodiversity in the statewide inventory, although restoration efforts could improve biodiversity in the park. In comparison, other regional parks in Dakota County including Spring Lake Park Reserve, Whitetail Woods Regional Park and Miesville Ravine Park Reserve all have areas rated as high biodiversity. Figure 18 maps the Significant Ecological Resources in the park.

Figure 18: Lebanon Hills Regional Park Significant Ecological Resources



The master plan describes four major disruptions that have affected the park's natural systems:

1. Long-term land use change, including farming and abandonment: Removal of native vegetation and farming damaged park ecosystems, through erosion, loss of soil fertility, and loss of the native seed bank. The biology, chemistry, and structure of park soils are degraded from their native state, limiting options for restoration.
2. Removal of natural cycles, such as naturally occurring fire, has allowed colonization by woody plants that convert open grasslands to shade-dominated successional woodlands.
3. Disrupted natural systems: Development around the park changed local hydrology and increased stormwater runoff into lakes and wetlands, with chemicals, nutrients, and sediments.
4. Invasive species degrade ecosystems and prevent regeneration of native red oaks, the park's dominant native tree. As oaks decline, buckthorn and other species will dominate. Buckthorn is well-established and is the major threat.

These disruptions contribute to the degradation of the soils, water, and vegetation in the park through ongoing erosion especially in areas heavily infested with buckthorn, which shades out native ground cover species; continuing sedimentation of shallow lakes, many of which will likely transition to wetlands over time without intervention; and lack of native community and tree regeneration, which eventually results in replacement of native oak forests with buckthorn thickets.

The master plan acknowledges that restoration and stewardship are critically important to reverse the downward trend in the quality of the park's natural resources and recommends a strengthened stewardship program that considers:

- Public preferences in a landscape revered for scenic quality
- Ecological benefits that restore natural systems

- Strategic approaches that optimize efforts
- Fiscal realities and new funding
- Implementation needs for expertise and capacity

The master plan identifies a vision for natural resource restoration to manage and restore the landscapes that define Lebanon Hills, to enhance ecological health. Vision elements include:

1. Healthy oak savanna and prairie in upper watershed and upland areas.
2. Healthy woodland and forest areas: Improve oak woods and convert degraded woods to healthier communities; control buckthorn.
3. Priority lakes, ponds, and wetlands are buffered to reduce nutrient loading, sedimentation, and infill.
4. Restored stream channels are repaired from past storm events and protected from further erosion in the future.
5. Biodiversity is increased by managing the park's rare native woodlands and addition of rare or absent native trees in suitable areas.
6. Rejuvenated conifer plantations enhance habitat and the park experience.
7. Restoration in tandem with recreational improvements, provides maintains natural character, and manages invasive species.

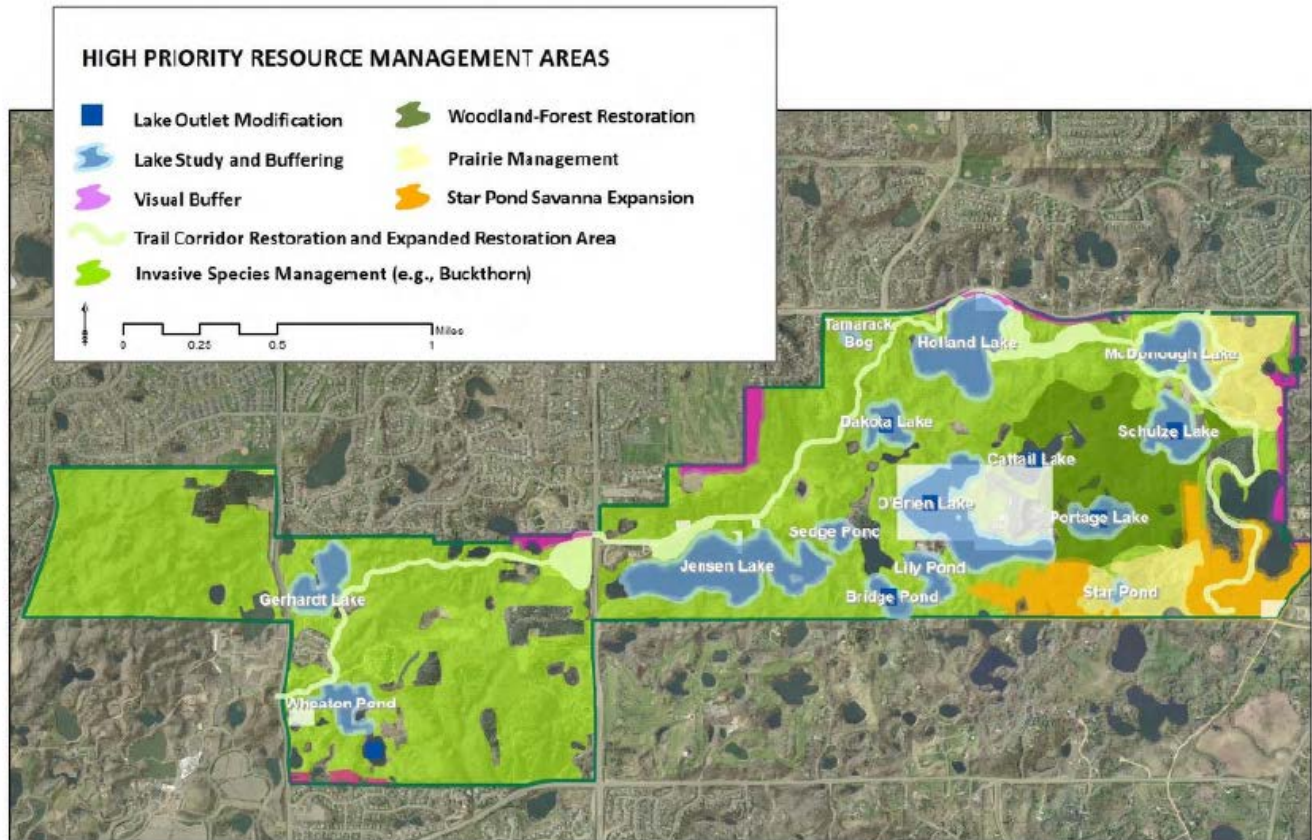
Restoration priorities were identified in the master plan. Because the east side of the park has many water bodies and higher ecological value, it is a higher priority than the middle or west portions. The restoration priorities are shown in Figure 19 and identified below:

- Prepare a comprehensive Natural Resources Management Plan
- Maintain previously restored areas (100 acres)
- Expand oak savanna restoration (77 acres)
- Complete lake outlets and small engineering projects
- Evaluate and buffer high priority water bodies
- Manage invasive species on a park-wide basis (945 acres)
- Manage oak forest near Cattail, Portage, and Schulze lakes (117 acres)
- Restore new trail corridors (30-40 acres, minimum)
- Establish visual buffers (35 acres, minimum)
- Enhance public information, education, engagement, and volunteerism

Medium priorities for large-area restoration projects include stream channel restoration throughout the park (5-10 acres), rare woodland restoration and management (11 acres) and rejuvenation of park conifer plantings (90 acres). The master plan also identifies some small area restoration projects with improvements to visitor facilities.

Estimated costs for natural resource stewardship activities are \$8,088,506. More than half of this total is identified for managing invasive species on approximately 945 acres throughout the regional park

Figure 19: Lebanon Hills Regional Park High Priority Restoration Areas



Review by Other Council Divisions

Community Development – Environment and Surface Water Management (Jim Larsen 651-602-1159) The stormwater and environmental sections of the master plan are well presented and I do not have any technical comments in those areas.

Environmental Services – Sewers (Roger Janzig 651-602-1119) – No comments.

Transportation/Aviation Planning (Russ Owen 651-602-1705) – The master plan is consistent with Transportation and Aviation policies.

Local Planning Assistance (Patrick Boylan 651-602-1438) – The master plan appears to be consistent with the adopted comprehensive plans for the cities of Eagan and Apple Valley.

Conclusions

1. The Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan is consistent with the requirements of the 2030 Regional Parks Policy Plan and other Council policies.

As of July 22, 2015, the Metropolitan Council received 144 comment statements in opposition to the master plan. The majority of the concerns were regarding the paved trail and the Dakota County approval process. The Council’s role in the review of the master plan is to ensure that it is

consistent with the *Regional Parks Policy Plan* and other Council policies and does not negatively impact the Council's other systems—Transportation, Aviation, and Wastewater Services.

The paved trail is consistent with the *Regional Parks Policy Plan* for the following reasons:

- Hiking/walking and bicycling are activities that “should be accommodated in the regional parks system” (*Recreation Activities and Facilities Strategy 1*)
- The paved trail was planned to “be reasonably, feasibly, and safely accommodated without detriment to existing uses as determined through the master plans for facility improvements to accommodate the use, or through regional park implementing agency board policy decisions on park/trail management issues.” (*Recreation Activities and Facilities Strategy 1*)
- The paved trail alignment was planned to avoid the areas of the park identified as Moderate Quality biodiversity as much as feasible. The trail will go through areas that are identified for invasive species management and will provide opportunities for restoration. “Be protective of the environment/ecology of the site and not negatively impact its natural resources.” (*Recreation Activities and Facilities Strategy 1*)
- *Recreation Activities and Facilities Strategy 3* states that “regional parks facilities and programs should encourage use by special populations.” Special populations are defined as “people with physical and mental disabilities, those with low incomes, racial-ethnic minorities, single parents and elderly people.” The paved trail will allow persons with disabilities, families with strollers, people with limited mobility, and the elderly to access portions of the park that are not currently easily accessible.
- *Recreation Activities and Facilities Strategy 4* states that “bicycle and pedestrian access and trails must be part of the regional parks system.”

As described in the *Citizen Participation* section on page 23, the master planning process is consistent with the requirements of the 2030 *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. Technical reviewers on Council staff did not identify any concerns or impacts on Council systems or inconsistency with Council policy.

2. The estimated cost to implement the master plan is \$27,519,451, which includes \$7,197,300 for land acquisition, \$8,088,556 for natural resource stewardship, and \$12,233,595 for development.
3. Approval of this master plan and grant request does not commit the Council to any additional funding at this time. Future funding based on this master plan may be awarded through the Park Acquisition Opportunity Fund, Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and the Parks and Trails Legacy Fund. Council action is required to approve specific grants to Dakota County.
4. The master plan includes a concept plan for improvements to Camp Sacajawea in its current location, yet also discusses the option of moving the maintenance facility and possibly relocating Camp Sacajawea to the current maintenance site or elsewhere in the park, since the current location lacks lake access and limits recreation options for visitors. The master plan recommends that the County conduct additional evaluation before any improvements are undertaken. Dakota County should submit information regarding the location and estimated costs for the relocation and development of Camp Sacajawea and the maintenance facility for approval prior to seeking regional parks funding for these projects.

ATTACHMENT A: DAKOTA COUNTY BOARD RESOLUTION

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DAKOTA COUNTY, MINNESOTA

March 17, 2015
Motion by Commissioner Gaylord

Resolution No. 15-156
Second by Commissioner Gerlach

Consider Adoption Of Revised Master Plan For Lebanon Hills Regional Park

WHEREAS, the County Board accepted the Final Report of the Lebanon Hills Citizen Panel at their January 13, 2015 Physical Development Committee (PDC) meeting and directed staff on specific revisions to the draft master plan, providing a thirty-day public review and comment period and returning with the plan and public comments to the March 2015, PDC meeting (Resolution No. 15-047); and

WHEREAS, the thirty-day public review of the revised draft master plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park was held from January 26, 2015, through February 25, 2015, with the revised draft plan posted on the County website and available at County libraries and the Lebanon Hills Visitor Center; and

WHEREAS, public comments were received from more than 600 interested parties; and

WHEREAS, the County Board has reviewed the new public comments, existing comments, public input, and the Citizen Panel comments.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Dakota County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan as presented to the Physical Development Committee of the Whole at its meeting on March 10, 2015, with modifications listed below as directed at the meeting; and authorizes staff to submit the modified master plan to the Metropolitan Council for its review and comment.

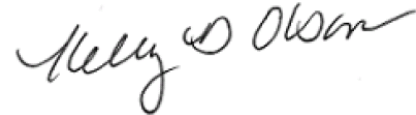
- Removal of Camper Cabins
- Removal of lighting for cross country ski trails
- Elevate invasive species management to a Tier 1 priority project
- Strike language throughout the document regarding a 20 mph design speed for the connector trail
- Delay implementation of Camp Sacajawea improvements until relocation study is complete
- Removal of Greenway language when speaking about the connector trail within the park; Greenway is to come to the park but not through the park
- Reduce width of connector trail to eight feet throughout document
- Replace the term "bikeway" with "connector trail" in sections of the document referring to the connector trail

STATE OF MINNESOTA County of Dakota

	VOTE
Slavik	Yes
Gaylord	Yes
Egan	No
Schouweiler	No
Workman	Yes
Holberg	Yes
Gerlach	Yes

I, Kelly Olson, Clerk to the Board of the County of Dakota, State of Minnesota, do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing copy of a resolution with the original minutes of the proceedings of the Board of County Commissioners, Dakota County, Minnesota, at their session held on the 17th day of March, 2015, now on file in the County Administration Department, and have found the same to be a true and correct copy thereof.

Witness my hand and official seal of Dakota County this 19th day of March, 2015.



Clerk to the Board

ATTACHMENT B: PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH AUGUST 11, 2015

No.	Name	Date	Comments with concerns regarding the Master Plan (through 8/11/15) (verbatim—no edits were made)
1	Kelly Griffiths #1	2/13/15	<p>I am distressed by the recent development regarding the 2015 revised draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, specifically the connector trail- a 6 mile, 10 foot wide asphalt path that is currently set to run through wooded areas of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I think the park system in Dakota County should be evaluated as a whole in determining whether the goals of the Met Council are being met. I believe if you look at the park system as a whole, you will find that there are sufficient numbers of paved trails, picnic areas, and play areas within Dakota County parks. The goal of having multimodal parks is an important one, but, does every park and every area of that park have to be multimodal, or, should we be looking at the park system as a whole? The proposal of a paved bike trail through Lebanon Hills seems excessive as there are existing paved bike trails on Cliff Road, McAndrews, Johnny Cake Ridge Road Galaxy Avenue which do not receive ample use, but, border Lebanon Hills Park. There are currently paved trails in Lebanon Hills Park, as well. Additionally, the proposed trail runs through a deeply wooded and hilly area of Lebanon Hills Park in the North/middle side of the park. Although I hate to concede that a paved path is necessary at all, a path through the middle of the central area of the park would be less impactful to the environment and I believe it would be less expensive. However; looking at the park system as a whole, the Dakota County Park system lacks the pristine wooded natural areas such that exist in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. There are rarely used paved bike trails all over Dakota County. We do not need another. It was suggested to me by Pat Sullivan that a paved trail would be beneficial because there would be year around access in the park for hikers and runners. These words were spoken by someone who obviously does not use the park. There are runners, hikers, snowshoers and walkers in Lebanon Hills year around. Lebanon Hills Regional Park is a jewel that should be left alone. A paved trail through the park is an irreversible loss to Dakota County residents. I ask that you look for a connector trail that skirts Lebanon Hills Park and leave this park “Wild Forever”.</p>
2	Margaret Skelton (1)	2/13/15	<p>I am deeply concerned about the 2015 revised draft Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park, specifically the connector trail- a 6 mile, 10 foot wide asphalt path that is currently set to run through wooded areas of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. There are ample paved trails, picnic areas, and play areas within Dakota County parks, city-managed parks, and the adjacent parks. What we don’t have enough of are pristine wooded natural areas that give the feel of wilderness while being located in the suburbs. Our Lebanon Hills Regional Park is one such jewel. It gives us that rare opportunity to get out into the wilderness for an afternoon. If Dakota County fractures this jewel with paved trails, camper cabins, natural play areas, and picnic areas then they will have ruined our unique park forever. The draft’s stated goal of “something for everyone” already exists in the multitude of park opportunities we are fortunate to have in Dakota County. What would actually be achieved by this proposal is “wilderness for no one”. It’s a mistake and an irreversible loss to Dakota County residents. Further, it does not</p>

			correlate to the Parks Departments motto "Forever Wild." The overwhelming voice of the people that use the park is to leave it pristine. If, for some reason, paving the park is required. The paved area should be around Schultz Lake that already has been partially paved.
3	Kelly Griffitts #2	2/19/15	<p>I have shared this information with the County Board of Commissioners. The overwhelming sentiment of their constituency as judged by the participation at Board Meetings and "Open Houses" is against a paved road through this park, yet, this portion of the plan persists.</p> <p>The Met Council's role according to Regional Parks System legislation directs the Council to take the leading role in providing for a Regional Parks System that will complement the recreational open space opportunities provided in the area by the federal, state and local units of government.</p> <p>State law gives the Council the authority to determine which parks and trails in the seven-county area are included in the Regional Parks System and to generally identify areas that should be acquired for the Regional Parks System. The Council is charged with determining whether these lands are regionally important and would collectively provide a balanced system of outdoor recreation for the region. The Council also contributes and administers funding to the regional park implementing agencies to acquire, develop and operate the Regional Parks System. Without the funding source controlled by the Met Council, the proposed Road through Lebanon Hills cannot be constructed. I am asking that the Met Council review this plan and conclude that the best use of Lebanon Hills is to keep the natural trail system and not destroy the ecosystem where the paved road will be placed.</p> <p>The Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, appointed by the Council, uses its expertise to advise the Council on the review of regional park and trail master plans, grants for land acquisition and capital improvements. It also provides recommendations on updates and amendments to the Regional Parks Policy Plan. I am asking that you review the proposed Lebanon Hills Master Plan and deny their request for capital improvements such as the paved road proposed through the Park.</p> <p>The Met Council's 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan indicates that the Met Council will determine the manner in which the Park and Trail Fund dollars and CIP are spent. These are at least part of the funding sources for the paved road contemplated running through Lebanon Hills Regional Park, I believe. The legislature has provided the Met Council the power and authority to fund our Regional Parks. "The pressure of urbanization and development threatens the most valuable remaining large recreational open spaces in the metropolitan area at the same time as the need for such areas is increased. Immediate action is therefore necessary to provide funds to acquire, preserve, protect and develop regional recreational open space for public use." (Minn. Stat. 473.302). This proposed road through Lebanon Hills is the "pressure of urbanization" that threatens to open spaces that your Agency is designed to protect .</p> <p>Your office controls the money to fund these projects. The Dakota County Board of Commissioners are ignoring their constituency. I am not sure what their motivations consist of, but, they are certainly trying to attract Met Council dollars to fund capital improvements that the overwhelming majority of the public do not want. Again, looking at the park system as a whole, we have parks with paved trails, we have very few without paved trails. Taken as a whole, let's preserve the natural setting of Lebanon Hills as much as we can at this point and deny funding this road through this Regional Park.</p> <p>I am asking that the Met Council not fund this paved road through Lebanon Hills. The Dakota County Board has</p>

			had their mind made up and closed for some time If you are not the appropriate person to express this sentiment (regarding Funding of the road through Lebanon Hills Regional Park) please direct me to the appropriate person, or, please forward this e-mail.
4	Dugaid Anderson	5/6/15	I have reading and hearing about the proposed development and I agree with the very large amount of people who want to keep it as a undeveloped park. I use it a lot and to make it like all the other parks around. The ADA argument is bogus too there is nothing in it to do with this park.
5	Katie Mosher	5/19/15	I would like to express my deep opposition to any plan for Lebanon Hills Park that includes more than one mile of paved trails. This park is a treasure for the entire state due to it's wild and natural environment. The opposition from the public that uses this park has been overwhelmingly against it the current and previous master plan. Yet the park board continues to press on with their invasive and costly plan to pave the park. It does make one wonder who is profiting from this but I know for sure the taxpayer won't. With all the other needs in the state it would seem there are a thousand other uses for the 27 million this project is estimated to cost. I believe that doesn't even include maintenance on it over the years. There are many other ways to provide those with disabilities with access to all the trails in a way that they can also enjoy it's natural setting. Sharing a 8 foot trail with bikers and roller blades is certainly not any safe way for them to enjoy it. Please listen to those that use this park and have voiced our extreme opposition to this plan ever since it was first announced. Do you really want to be known as those responsible for changing the motto from "Forever Wild" to "Forever Ruined"?
6	Jim Smola	6/1/15	Ms. Wulff, I am asking you to oppose any development in the Lebanon Hills Regional Park! I do not think paving and widening paths is the correct way to allow accessibility for disabled people.
7	Anne LaGoo	6/8/15	I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of Dakota County. My concerns are in regards to the paved trail that is being considered for Lebanon Hills Regional park. This proposed trail concerns me on so many levels and I am hoping it concerns each of you enough that you will vote against this trail. First of all is the cost of this trail. When I first learned about this trail it was going to cost upwards of \$16M to build. Since then, I've read that this trail is now costing tax payers over \$28M. This is just to build the trail and there is no consideration given to maintaining it throughout the year. I do not want my tax dollars to continue to increase to maintain a trail that I strongly oppose. To date, no one has been able to answer my question - where are the funds to maintain this trail going to come from? And, if we have funding to put into our park system, why aren't we using it to maintain it from the buckthorn and other invasive plants that are slowly taking it over? We recently laid off some of the park system maintenance workers due to lack of funding. Honestly, I can not understand how we can justify spending millions of dollars to support a paved trail when the majority of the public

			<p>(the taxpayers) are against this trail.</p> <p>In addition the natural hills along this path - the hills that add beauty to the surroundings - have been shaved down so the trail is not so hilly. Again - we are ruining our natural environment for the sake of a few people's use. I would like to invite you both to see the destruction of this park before supporting the destruction of Lebanon Hills in this same manner.</p> <p>Finally, Minnesota has some of the most beautiful trails and bike paths in the country. There must be thousands of miles throughout our state and in some of the most beautiful locations. Bikers and other users of the paved trail systems have plenty of wonderful options. I honestly am struggling to understand why we need to take one of our last great wilderness park preserves - one that is enjoyed by many hikers, walkers, horseback riders and other outdoor enthusiasts and turn it into yet another paved trail. We don't need to ruin this gem of a park for such a small population of individuals who already have wonderful trails around the area to use and enjoy. I don't understand why leaving Lebanon Hills as is - is not an option.</p> <p>Please re-consider this paved trail and vote against it for the preservation of this beautiful natural resource in the midst of our city.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
8	Scott Johnson (1)	6/16/15	<p>To the Editor: (letter sent to ECM Publishers with a copy to the Metropolitan Council)</p> <p>In March 2015, Dakota County Commissioners approved the 2015 Lebanon Hills Master Plan, including the controversial 6-mile, year-round asphalt trail, requiring significant hill cuts and large scale tree removal throughout the park.</p> <p>Of the 690 (“unique, individual, non-formulated, hand written letters and emails” – per Commissioners Egan & Schouweiler) public comments submitted to the Board -- only 22 supported this idea. The other 97% were ignored and the plan was moved on. There is no public outcry asking for this new pavement in the woods, rather – the outcry is to stop it. But this is not over.</p> <p>The Metropolitan Council is reviewing the plan, and will decide whether to adopt this \$28 million unpopular plan and thereby make it eligible for funding, or send it back to Dakota County for re-do with meaningful public engagement. Our roads, bridges, and sewers are crumbling. There are other transportation needs of this money that are more urgent than paving the hiking and biking trails in the hills and creating a needless multi-million dollar bridge street overpass and <u>trail into the Minnesota Zoo that duplicates five other nearby paved trails</u> with existing lighted crosswalks <u>just a block away</u> in all directions.</p> <p>It is time once again to let decision makers hear from you. If you do not want Lebanon Hills developed like so many parks we already have, tell the Metropolitan Council that Dakota County needs to be accountable to public input. Tell them not to adopt a plan opposed by 97% of the public.</p> <p>Submit comments now to public.info@metc.state.mn.us.</p>
9	Richard Dillinger	6/19/15	<p>Please send the 2015 Lebanon Hills Master Plan back to the drawing board.</p>

10	Patricia Dillinger	6/19/15	Please do not put the newly proposed paved trail through Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Dakota County. It will destroy too much of what makes the park precious to its visitors. We need to preserve the piece of nature for our children.
11	Jason and Paula Norgaard	6/19/15	My wife and I are frequent visitors to Lebanon Hills to hike. Please, please do not alter our park. I realize the need for paved trails at parks but Minnesota has many, many parks to accommodate those that need or wish to walk on pavement. Signed, Another Eagan citizen who feels it is a waste of funds when no change is needed.
12	Rick Graves (1)	6/20/15	In March 2015 Dakota County commissioners approved the 2015 Lebanon Hills Master Plan against the expressed opinions of 97% of those who expressed an opinion on the plan. I see that this plan is now part of Business Item No 2015-141 Set Public Hearing Date for 2016-2021 Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program (CIP) on the Consent Agenda for the June 24, 2015 Metropolitan Council meeting. It is not clear to me when the Metropolitan Council considers the individual portions of this CIP but when such consideration does take place, I recommend that the Metropolitan Council reject the 2015 Lebanon Hills Master Plan and return that to Dakota County with instructions that Dakota County listen to the 97% of the comments received on that plan and update the plan accordingly. 97% of the comments opposed the wide connector trails and the paved trails that are proposed by the plan. 97% of those who commented on the plan preferred much less development in Lebanon Hill park than the plan proposed. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.
13	Pat Ryan	6/20/15	I am a resident of Dakota County and want to voice my opposition to the needless "development" of Lebanon Hills, Dakota County's last open chunk of land that bears any resemblance to the world "wild". Why do we need another "developed" park? ALL the other parks are already developed! Can't there be one left "wild"? There have been hundreds of letters written, emails sent, and opinions voiced at meetings in OPPOSITION to this plan. We taxpayers do not want our tax dollars spent this way, nor do we want our park developed. Since few Dakota County Commissioners are able to hear and appreciate our objections, I am turning to the Met Council to plead with them to send this Lebanon Hills plan back to Dakota County in order to get UN-CENSORED input from residents and come up with a plan that the residents can support. In addition we residents have little respect for these "planners" since we can see how they sold the 150 foot swath of trees and raped the land in their cut-and-fill "leveling" of the beautiful contours through the Spring Lake Park Reserve near Hastings under the guise of building a "trail", just like these scheming Commissioners plan for Lebanon Hills! Please see that this does not happen!
14	Chris Hjort	6/21/15	I am writing to let you know that I oppose the current plan to spend taxpayer money to pave more trails at Lebanon Hills. Our family has used the park and we love the natural setting and feel the money could be saved or used in a more appropriate fashion. Listen to the people in Dakota County who have overwhelmingly voiced their opposition to the paved trails plan. Thank you.

15	Amber Garlan #1	6/21/15	<p>(via email and mailed letter) Please stop the Dakota County Commissioner's plan to build a six mile asphalt multi-use bike trail Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Please stop this plan and preserve the natural character of Lebanon Hills Regional Park.</p> <p>Wild spaces in the city are precious and must be preserved. Here are some of the reasons I am against the plan to build a bike path in Lebanon Hills Regional Park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Bulldozing hills and significant tree clearance required for construction. · It would remove miles of existing woodlands and prairies, and disrupt and fragment wildlife habitat.
16	Richard Dornfeld	6/21/15	<p>One of the slogans for Lebanon Hills Parks was "Forever Wild". Why destroy one of the best natural parks in the metro area with a 10 foot wide trail and removing countless trees and then paving this with asphalt. Of all the people that I have talked with NO one wants that trail. There are other paved trails that border this park so why cut through the middle and destroy this "FOREVER WILD" PARK..</p> <p>THIS TRAIL IS NOT NEEDED OR WANTED BY THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE THAT USE THE PARK.</p>
17	Susan and Jeffrey Hagman	6/22/15	<p>We love our "wild" Lebanon Hills park and want it to remain a place undisturbed by pavement through its heart. We are so proud to live in Eagan and feel it has been planned and operated in an environmentally and progressive fashion since we moved here in 1972. Thank you for your part in planning for a wonderful Eagan. We have wonderful paved trails for biking, strollers, wheelchairs and other wheeled conveyance. These trails take us through our neighborhood and to explore others if we want a paved trail. When we want to experience the natural world we drive to Lebanon and hike the "wild" dirt trails. We are then immediately part of Dakota County as is was before farming and suburbia took over. Ahhhhh! Let's keep it!</p> <p>As a member of the Met Council, we ask you to veto the Lebanon Hills Master Plan.</p> <p>Pavement, grading, and tree destruction through its heart is not preserving our wonderful county resource.</p>
18	Amber Garlan #2	6/22/15	<p>There are parts of Met Council's policy that many believe were violated by Dakota County, including their criteria to involve the general public in the master planning.</p> <p>The public in Eagan, Apple Valley and Rosemount should be involved regarding plans that effect the natural character of their park, Lebanon Hills Regional Park. The Dakota County Board of Commissioners have not fulfilled their duty in inform and involve the public.</p> <p>Please do not approve the plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park made by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners involving Lebanon Hills Regional Park until the public of Eagan, Apple Valley and Rosemount have been informed and involved.</p>
19	Pat Ryan	6/22/15	<p>I am a resident of Dakota Country and want to voice my opposition to the needless "development" of Lebanon Hills, Dakota County's last open chunk of land that bears any resemblance to the world "wild". Why do we need another "developed" park? ALL the other parks are already developed! Can't there be one left "wild"?</p> <p>There have been hundreds of letters written, emails sent, and opinions voiced at meetings in OPPOSITION to this plan. We taxpayers do not want out tax dollars spent this way, nor do we want our park developed. Since few Dakota Country Commissioners are able to hear and appreciate our objections, I am turning to the Met Council to plead with them to send this Lebanon Hills plan back to Dakota County in order to get UN-</p>

			<p>CENSORED input from residents and come up with a plan that the residents can support. In addition we residents have little respect for these "planners" since we can see how they sold the 150 foot swath of trees and raped the land in their cut-and-fill "leveling" of the beautiful contours through the Spring Lake Park Reserve near Hastings under the guise of building a "trail", just like these scheming Commissioners plan for Lebanon Hills! Please see that this does not happen!</p>
20	Amber Garlan #3	6/23/15	<p>(On public comment voice mail)</p> <p>Please stop. Please vote no on the Dakota County Commissioner's plan to construct a 6 mile asphalt multi-use bike trail through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. It would destruct the natural wilderness area and it is not environmentally sustainable to construct this asphalt through this natural wilderness area. Please preserve the wild spaces in the cities. It is very important that Lebanon Hills Regional Park remains intact and undisturbed. Please vote no on the plan to construct a bike path through that park. Thank you and have a lovely day.</p>
21	Irene Kotula	6/23/15	<p>I am writing with regard to our beautiful Dakota County Lebanon Hills Park. Having lived in Eagan for over 40 years, I have enjoyed hiking and skiing with my children and friends and now my grandchildren in this wonderful, wilderness style park countless times. Just recently I took my cousin from New York City for a hike there to give her a feel of the Minnesota outdoors. There are plenty of paved trails throughout the twin cities for those who want to use those but few natural settings left for people to experience. It would ruin the whole experience having to watch for bikers and skaters whizzing by. Besides disturbing the wildlife, the quiet, peaceful setting would be gone forever for the generations to come.</p> <p>I have not heard any person in Eagan say this proposed change is wanted. We love our "free-style" park the way it is! (If anything, the park could use trail maps on the trails that people cannot scratch the trail numbers off of.....why they have to do that is beyond me.) Please, please reconsider changing Lebanon Hills Park. Thank you.</p>
22	Margaret Sorenson	6/24/15	<p>I am one of those that is so upset that you would put an asphalt trail through Lebanon Hills Park. I see no reason to disturb the natural environment. We have so little of it left. We must really work to save what we have. I do not want that trail to be asphalt and 8 feet wide.</p>
23	Donna Watier	6/24/15	<p>I'm calling about Lebanon Hills Regional Park and what some people want to do to ruin it. I want it stopped before it gets started. You have the power to do that.</p>
24	DeAnne Dubbs	6/24/15	<p>Please do not destroy what I so recently discovered. Last summer I went for a walk in Lebanon Hills Park and thought i'd stepped onto the Superior Hiking Trail. Soft, leaf strewn paths. Quiet. Birds. Wind in the trees. There are so few places like that. So special to have one close by. Not every public space needs to be 100% accessible to wheels on bikes, skates, scooters, wheelchairs, walkers. Leave some places wild so that we can dream that we are the first humans to visit. Once you put the asphalt down, it is there for at least our lifetime. So sad to explain it to the children why we couldn't leave it be as beautiful as it was when we first discovered it. Oh, Camp Sacajawea, what wonderful memories you gave me as a youth.</p>

25	Paul Kraus	6/24/15	Authorizing the construction of a paved path through a woodland gem is advocating an ecological disaster. Please do not support the development of the paved trail through Lebanon Hills.
26	Jerry Kotzenmacher	6/24/15	Don't degrade our natural areas. Stop the pavement in the park.
27	Clara Ueland	6/24/15	Legacy money is not appropriate for the paving project in Lebanon Hills Park. It is meant to preserve Minnesota's natural areas, not damage them. Please do not fund this very unpopular and unwise proposal.
28	Lisa Quist	6/24/15	I am a user of Lebanon Hills Park and would like to register my opposition to the plan for a 6 mile asphalt trail. There are so few unpaved trails in the Twin Cities. We need this trail to stay natural.Thank you.
29	Christine McMichael	6/24/15	I understand that in mid-July you will consider Dakota County's plan to insert a 6-mile, 8-foot wide asphalt trail through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. As a resident of Dakota County for 27 years, a volunteer ski patrol for Dakota County and a person who frequents this park, I urge you to stop this proposed trail. There are many paved trails within Dakota County for all residents to use for an outside experience. I believe the proposed paved trail is a gross misuse of funds that will degrade a park that many people experience as the closest thing to "up north" without the long drive.
30	Mary Ellen Nichols	6/24/15	Please do not allow Lebanon Hills Park to have an asphalt bike trail. Surveys proved that people do not want the asphalt bike trail, yet county commissioners voted for it. I would be happy to meet any of you at Lebanon Hills Park and show you the undeveloped beauty of the park which you are looking at destroying with the asphalt bike trail. As Dakota County gets more developed, Lebanon Hills is a gift of nature that should be preserved for all to use and not have an asphalt bike trial. The asphalt trail will destroy nature instead of enhancing it. We need more green space, not less. Pope Francis just recently came out with his document that it's all of our responsibility, no matter what your religious affiliation, to protect the environment. The asphalt bike trail would be expensive and that money could be better spent on causes that people want and need. I am an avid biker but do not see the trail in Lebanon Hills as a fiscal responsible way to spend money. The intent of the 2008 Legacy Amendment is to help not destroy natural resources. The asphalt bike trail reminds me of the words to the song "They paved paradise and put in a parking lot.." Please do not allow the asphalt bike trail in Lebanon Hill Park. Thank you.

31	Joshua Fahey	6/24/15	I do not support Dakota County's efforts to use Legacy funds for the paving of a trail in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I do not deny the convenience of having a paved trail through a forest, but I know it would significantly detract from the natural biology in the area. There are many other nearby paved trails in the area. It would be disrespectful to nature and a disservice to future generations to implement construction through a nature preserve.
32	Tera Atkins	6/24/15	<p>I understand that in mid-July you will consider Dakota County's plan to insert a 6-mile, 8-foot wide asphalt trail through Lebanon Hills Regional Park.</p> <p>As a resident of Dakota County for 27 years, a volunteer ski patrol for Dakota County and a person who frequents this park, I urge you to stop this proposed trail.</p> <p>There are many paved trails within Dakota County for all residents to use for an outside experience. I believe the proposed paved trail is a gross misuse of funds that will degrade a park that many people experience as the closest thing to "up north" without the long drive.</p>
33	Jill Danner	6/24/15	<p>When was the last time you voted for something that 97% of 690 public comments were against the project? With 10 years experience on the St Paul Parks and Recreation Commission and 6 years on the West Side Citizen's Organization I can say I never did! Yet the Dakota County Board did vote against the public in favor of spending millions of dollars to destroy the wilderness aspect of Lebanon Hills. What is the benefit? Really nothing unless you are a bulldozer operator.</p> <p>Why would they do this? For bike paths? Do we not have hundreds of miles of bike paths? For ADA accessibility? Do we not have thousands of miles of sidewalks and paths in existence for wheelchairs? Oh am I being harsh and biased against ADA accessibility? NO! I have a husband that can walk a 1/4 mile tops and uses a wheelchair everyday. Do I want a 6 mile trail through Lebanon so I can push him or he can wheel himself? When we reach the end of the 6 mile trail we can then turn around and go back 6 miles. OH MY that sounds fun!. It is ridiculous to think we need this type of accessibility! What is needed and missing is wilderness accessibility. Clearing a path so it can be ADA grade makes no feasible or economic sense. You will destroy the wilderness aspect for everyone by clear cutting, leveling, and paving the path. What about snow removal and maintenance? Who and how is that financed? Any Plans? NO!</p> <p>National and State parks do not have ADA accessibility everywhere because it would destroy the very reason the parks exist. That is why you should not do it at Lebanon Hills either. Is there an alternative to this plan that could work? I believe there is.</p> <p>What my husband and I would like is the wilderness experience. For a mere fraction of the cost you could provide two or three kiosks where disabled people could rent an electric golf cart or wheel chair type vehicle that could handle specific trails and truly get out into the wilderness. The vehicles should only be available to those with a parking pass for disabled people and one other passenger. They should be quiet to keep the outdoor experience in line with hikers, canoes, and horses. But it is the best alternative.</p> <p>What about bikers? Do a perimeter path and use existing road ways to get to the building. Keep the middle of the park as it is now, bike free.</p> <p>I have used the horse trails since the 1970's and I really want the miles increased not decreased. We have lost well over 2 miles of trails in recent years. These are the best trails in the metro area because there are no bikers.</p>

			The hikers present enough of a problem when they walk on the horse trails. Please respect our use of the trails too. Keep this rape of the landscape from occurring! Please do not approve this plan.
34	Janet Llerandi	6/24/15	I am 100% against this 6 mile, 8 foot wide, flat asphalt trail. We don't need it nor do we want it. How can you even consider cutting down trees especially in a park? As a taxpayer I respectfully request you reconsider this stupid idea.
35	Betty Freese	6/24/15	Please reconsider your plan to put the asphalt trail through the interior of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I can not believe you can responsibly remove mature oaks and turn that into a asphalt trail. PLEASE reconsider, for the sake of wildlife lovers, wildlife, including birds and butterflies!
36	Jolene Laurence	6/24/15	I am against the planned development of Lebanon Hills. Currently, the park offers so much to the community in regards to a nature experience. I feel like I'm up north when cross country skiing. In the spring to fall, my family experiences many bird sightings, butterflies..... I have a co-worker who rides her horse with freinds everyday. Pleae don't destroy this valuable asset.
37	Laurel Daly	6/24/15	My name is Laurel Daly and I live in West St. Paul, MN. I frequently go to Lebanon Hills and wanted to send some thoughts about the paved bike trail that Dakota County is trying to push. There's plenty of places all throughout Eagan, MN, for bikers, but there's only one Lebanon Hills. I do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills, and I hope that my voice and the voice of many others will be put into consideration. 97% of the general public opposed the idea, and that 97% was disregarded. I would greatly appreciate it if you reconsidered the plan and sent it back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.
38	Joyce Tollerud	6/24/15	This is to express my disapproval of the plan to build a 10 foot paved trail across Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I am a long time resident of Eagan and a close neighbor to the Park. When I voted for the Legacy fund tax increase, I thought we would be using the funds to protect some of the scarce natural areas still left, and NOT to bulldoze an asphalt path across Lebanon Hills. The only possible reason for this could be accessibility, but there are hundreds of miles of paved trail in the metro area and very little undeveloped parkland. Let's save the little we have left.
39	Mark Wirt	6/24/15	I do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills. The County Board disregarded 97% of general public input, and two of their own Commissioners. I urge you to send the Plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.
40	Megan Putler	6/24/15	I am writing to express my opposition to the Lebanon Hills Master Plan. I 100% do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills. The County Board disregarded 97% of general public input, and two of their own Commissioners. I urge you to send the Plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation. Lebanon Hills is a unique park in that one can truly feel a part of nature on the dirt paths and undisturbed trees and lakes. The proposed new path will interrupt that serenity irretrievably. A majority of parks in the Twin Cities are

			handicapped accessible with paved paths; as is a portion of Lebanon Hills near the Visitor's Center. The undeveloped character of this park is what makes it so special. Please do what the County Board did not and listen to the citizen pleas on this issue. Approving this master plan will effectively destroy one of this area's truest natural treasures. The community has spoken and its voice has thus far been disregarded. PLEASE take this into consideration
41	Nicole Everling	6/24/15	I'm writing today to encourage the Metropolitan Council to reject the plans for trail expansion in Lebanon Hills Park. The proposed plan for paved trails would place them in a conserved area and the bluffs and land features would be blown up and paved to make wide, blacktop covered trails that would be maintained at the tax payer's expense. There already has been opposition to this plan within the community and propose that the council reject this plan.
42	Dave Hinker	6/24/15	I was pleased to see this email address published in an editorial letter today. I have been looking for a way to add my voice to the thousands of other unheard voices who object to this plan to pave a place of natural beauty and solitude, Lebanon Hills park. It's a tragedy that our representatives are ignoring the majority of their constituents who oppose this project. I oppose it for two reasons: I don't see how paving it adds to or enhances the outdoor experience for those of us who treasure nature. As well, a recent writer pointed out that we are not maintaining existing trails due to budget cuts - how will we maintain these additional roads, which are not necessary in the first place? Please step in, act responsibly, and derail this project before real harm is done.
43	Dorothy Culbert	6/24/15	I am a Dakota County resident and I am very opposed to having yet another paved trail in Dakota County. What part of "natural" do the commissioners not understand? Please do not approve the paved trail in Lebanon Hills! Let's leave nature alone here!
44	Pat Stevesand #1	6/25/15	I am writing to beg you to not allow the over-development of Lebanon Hills. The County Board disregarded 97% of general public input, and two of their own Commissioners. I urge you to send the Plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation. In all honesty, I think the Commissioners should lose the power they have over park development. They do not have the knowledge or experience to "manage" our precious parks. This is obvious by what they did in Spring Lake Park, and obvious in what they have approved for Lebanon Hills. What they are doing is truly NOT representing their constituents. And they are not preserving the awesome nature of these two parks, one of which (Lebanon Hills) is already over populated with visitors. Let them decide where to put stop signs and roundabouts. That's all they might be qualified to do. I want to be represented. I do not want our parks to be ruined with asphalt trails cut right through the middle of hills or woods. This is a travesty.

45	Pat Stevesand #2	6/25/15	<p>I am hoping to influence your decision to support or not support the plan before you regarding Lebanon Hills. The plan has had a 97% unfavorable feedback response by citizens. We don't want to ruin that park with the type of overdevelopment being proposed. Please do not approve this plan.</p> <p>With citizen involvement, a better, more environmentally responsible plan can be implemented. One that would have the support of most people.</p> <p>It is our responsibility to treat our natural resources with more care and respect. You can't put back what you have taken away in most circumstances. But besides that, it is unethical for our commissioners to ignore their constituents. I would like to go a step further, and take away commissioner responsibility for natural resources. Let them decide where to put roundabouts and stop signs.....they can probably do no harm with those decisions.</p> <p>Please stand with us, the Metropolitan Council is our last hope.</p>
46	Mary Wierschem	6/25/14	<p>Stop the distraction of Lebanon hills. It's a one of a kind park in the. Metro area. Dakota county doesn't care what others think</p>
47	Peggy Pasillas	6/25/15	<p>I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills is a valuable and unique destination, which complements the regional park system, because of its wilderness aspects. The Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p> <p>I have been enjoying Lebanon Park in all seasons for over 25 years. I use the horse trails (am a season pass holder), hike, snowshoe and fish there. As a resident of Inver Grove Heights, Dakota County, I object to the proposed master plan on many levels.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public input regarding the proposed master plan was overwhelmingly rejected by county residents. 97% (which includes my input) of the people who commented did not approve of the proposal. The Park board completely ignored that input and passed a plan that no one wants. 2. \$28 Million for a trail that no one wants - it's ridiculous! 3. There are 100's of miles of bicycle trails throughout the metro area - slicing through one of the last wilderness areas in Dakota County to make a transportation route that destroys the natural beauty of the park is unforgivable! What Lebanon Park has to offer can't be replaced and must be protected! 4. ADA - seriously! If the intent is to provide a wilderness experience for handicapped/disabled people, it will not accomplish that goal. Instead it will turn Lebanon Park into a space like Minneapolis around Lake Calhoun where you take your life in your hands if you are walking because of all the bikes, roller bladers, runners who all share the paths. While that may work in Minneapolis, it's not appropriate for Lebanon Park where peace and quiet are the primary attractions. Want to provide a cost effective and higher quality wilderness experience for the disabled? Buy a number of electric golf carts or electric wheel chairs and rent them out at the visitor center. Most of the trails are wide enough and smooth enough for a cart or a wheelchair (friends have seen them on the trails already) and it would allow people who aren't mobile to still get out and enjoy what the park has to offer without having to dodge bicyclists on the trail. It would be cost effective, provide a better outdoor experience and

			<p>would draw people to the park. While in Florida for a vacation this April, we saw where the state parks provide beach wheelchairs with oversized wheels so people can get out on the beach. They don't try to pave the beach just so people can get out there, they help them find a way to enjoy it in its natural state. What a concept!</p> <p>5. Dakota County has not considered the on-going costs of maintaining a paved trail. It is much more expensive than the cost to maintain and repair than the natural trails. As a Dakota County resident I strongly object to my tax money being used to build and maintain this type of trail.</p> <p>6. It's an inappropriate use of Legacy Funds. Legacy funds were approved to protect natural resources not destroy them. Again, as a resident of the metro area, I object to my tax dollars being used to fund a project like this.</p> <p>7. The Dakota County park board has no accountability if the current master plan is approved. They could literally do anything they want if the plan and the funding is approved. It needs to go back to the county for appropriate public input and the establishment of appropriate oversight for the final version.</p>
48	Marnie Sciamanda	6/25/15	<p>A new plan to develop a paved path within Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Eagan, MN has recently been adopted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners and is awaiting review by the Metropolitan Council. As a resident of the area, I wanted to share my thoughts on the plan.</p> <p>I do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills. The County Board disregarded 97% of general public input, and two of their own Commissioners. I urge you to send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation. The citizens of Dakota County and frequent park-goers, like myself, have clearly taken a side on this issue that has not been recognized by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners. Lebanon Hills is a beautiful, natural site in Dakota County that a great deal of wildlife calls home. Paving right through the middle of the park would disrupt this wildlife, ruin natural habitats, as well as bring in more traffic to the park that would further disrupt it. Extending accessibility in parks is commendable, however, the current plan's way of doing so is not supportive of those who inhabit this park and frequent its natural trails. I know this is a controversial issue but again, the extent to which the majority of citizens have spoken out against this new plan suggests how important this issue is to me and my fellow residents of Dakota County. Before making a decision on this plan that sides with the Board of Commissioners, please take the words of residents and frequent visitors to Lebanon Hills into consideration.</p>
49	Curt Bauer	6/26/15	<p>I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills is a valuable and unique destination, which complements the regional park system, because of its wilderness aspects. The Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p> <p>There are many, many paved multi-use trails in the metro. Please keep Lebanon Hills wild.</p>
50	Rick Johnson	6/26/15	<p>Please do not rubber stamp the proposal brought before you from the Dakota County Board regarding Lebanon Hills Park. Please send it back to them requesting they look at the public input they ignored.</p>

51	Terri Shefelbine	6/26/15	Please send Dakota County's plan for Lebanon Hills back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation. As a resident of St. Paul, I value the wild spaces in Lebanon Hills park and do not believe the paved bike path is the right way to go.
52	Kevin Grass	6/25/15	We live in Burnsville even though it is my concerns that our Comisioneres have lost touch with the Citizens. We have County roads that need paving. This 6 mile bike trail is not right for the Park. Decades ago while the Minnesota zoo was under construction. My friends and myself would ride our motorcycles in these hills. Not one sentence has been brought to the general public about how much of some of the hills are going to be graded down. Let alone how many trees are going to be cut down.
53	Tom Yelle	6/25/15	<p>It's come to my attention that at the March 17 Dakota County Board of Commissioners voted 5-2 to move forward with the Lebanon Hills Master plan.</p> <p>As a hiker and frequent visiter to the park. I love the natural beauty as do the other visitors to the park. I personally use the park for hiking 2 to 3 days a week. It is my sanctuary and the sanctuary for many others on a daily basis. Lebanon Hills is a gem like no other in MN. It is a natural beauty.</p> <p>My concerns are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1)The community does not favor this proposal. I believe 97% of the community opposes this project. It's my understanding in response to 97% of the people voting against this proposal, the board reduced the width of the paved trail from 10 feed to 8. Given the clearing needed on both sides of the trail, trees removed, grading, that does not appear consistent with what the good people of Dakota County have expressed. 2) I'm concerned about how this trail would be maintained and who would pay for it? It's my understanding that has not been addressed and I'd like to know more. 3) I believe wheel chair and handicap access can be addressed, a path created but the natural park could remain. This path done at a more reasonable scale can preserve Lebanon Hills and it's beauty and meet the needs of those that need a paved trail. 4) I believe the negative impact to the wildlife cannot be understated. 5) it is my understanding that in order to place the paved trail, 100 to 150 must be cleared. If that is done for 6 miles, Lebanon Hills as we know it, will not exist. <p>I recognize there is money available. Let's spend this to clean up the park and trails, build a path that addresses the concerns of the wheel chair access but do it on a reasonable scale.</p> <p>Once work is started, we can never return the beauty and scenery back to area. It is a gem that needs to be protected at all cost.</p> <p>My request is to thoughtfully consider what the public desires and preserve the beauty that exists Thank you for your consideration</p>

54	Monica Rosen	6/26/15	To the Members of our Met Council Please allow me to say; I just don't understand why we can't have one park that is different from the rest. This summer I have biked several of the bike parks' Carver Park, Spring Lake, Lilly Dale, Etc. They are wonderful parks and I have enjoyed them all, but why is it that public opinion on leaving ONE park natural can't be excepted or understood by the people governing our county. Please send the plan back to Dakota county, for <u>meaningful citizen participation</u> .
55	John Bergquist	6/26/15	I do not support the Lebanon Hills Master Plan as submitted by the Dakota County Board of Commissioners. Lebanon Hills Regional Park is a one-of-a-kind resource for metro-area residents, providing a near-wilderness experience in our own backyard. Aspects of the master plan, if implemented, especially the disruptive construction of a paved bicycle trail through the park, would greatly degrade the wilderness experience one can now enjoy. Granted, bike trails are also a great resource, and the Twin Cities metro area can be justifiably proud of our trail network, but such a trail would be totally out of place in the heart of Lebanon Hills. In approving the plan on a 5-2 vote, the Board of Commissioners disregarded 97 percent of public input expressing opposition. To their credit, the two commissioners who voted against the plan were initially in support but courageously changed their positions because of overwhelmingly negative feedback from their constituents. Two other board members seemed to be wavering on the issue, but in the final vote they came down on the side of the plan; had they come down on the other side, the plan would have been defeated and not sent on to you for your consideration. Although those of us who live close to the park and are frequently able to take advantage of its treasures are especially sensitive to this matter, it is not merely a NIMBY issue. The entire metro area would be much the poorer if this gem of a park is allowed to be compromised.
56	Joe Chanslor	6/26/15	to desecrate Lebanon Hills like they did Spring Lake Park, or not. To pave, cut, fill , maintain, bulldoze, disrupt, fragment wildlife habitat, or not. To listen to the 97% of public comments that don't want it, or to the 3% that do. To be of, for and by the people, or not. Please do not approve Dakota Countys plan for Lebanon Hills. While I personally do not use the park that much, I am very opposed to those in charge imposing their will over 97% of their constituents wishes, and generally opposed to tearing up wilderness to pave a trail, spending an estimated \$28 million to do it , and untold \$\$ to maintain
57	Ed Ambrose (1 and 2)	6/26/15 and 7/7/15	I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills is a valuable and unique destination, which complements the regional park system, because of its wilderness aspects. The Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.

58	Patricia Lueth (1)	6/26/15	<p>My name is Patricia Lueth. I have been very involved for the past 4 years with the meetings, open houses, etc. for the Greenway bike trails being constructed at Spring Lake Park Reserve and proposed to be built at Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Myself, along with 95% of the public that are aware of these plans, have strong opposition for these plans. I feel the County Commissioners and Park staff have asked for public comments and we have been ignored. They asked for opinions and comments but did nothing with that except for check their boxes and keep for public record. For both parks, the communication and planning has NOT had significant public involvement and have NOT listened to the public that have responded to their requests.</p> <p>The amount of money that is being spent within these parks for highway like bike trails is not good for our community when there is other great needs like our vehicle roads & bridges.</p> <p>The funding for these projects is not clearly communicated to the public citizens. The amount of funding lacking will result in taxes used for projects NOT approved by the citizens that will pay for them.</p> <p>The natural resource destruction and altering is SAD at best. For 20 plus years, the natural resource restoration of these parks have been ignored and very little attention given until recently due to the plans for these trails.</p> <p>The amount of tree and intact forests that are being destroyed for these trails is very irresponsible of our elected officials and park staff. These parks are Reserve and Regional parks that should be protected, NOT constructed with paved trails and development that ruins the "Forever Wild" slogan for Dakota County.</p> <p>Please help to do the right thing. DO NOT approve the Lebanon Hills current Master Plan. Please help to STOP the madness, destruction, over spending and lack of responsibility at Spring Lake Park Reserve. It is not too late...the pavement has not been poured and many millions could be saved if the plans and alignments were less invasive.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>A VERY concerned and frustrated Eagan resident -</p>
59	Roxanne Napper	6/26/15	<p>Please send the plan back to Dakota County for citizen participation that encompasses all users. My interest is horseback riding but I want the area to serve all in the best and most manageable way.</p>
60	Mitchell Starkey	6/26/15	<p>My name is Mitchell Starkey and I live in Eagan Minnesota. I am emailing you today to express about my concern about the new developments in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. As a citizen and tax payer of the state of Minnesota and the city of Eagan I am vary worried about the prospect of the city paving over any amount of this pristine wilderness. There are so few places like this left in the is country to experience wilderness such as this and I am shocked that the city would try to move forward with an initiative that is so wildly unpopular with the community at large. With 97% disapproval as reported by the Star Tribune it is clear to me that the citizens of our city do not under any circumstances want this to happen.</p>

61	Crystal Yakacki	6/26/15	<p>My name is Crystal Yakacki and I live in Minneapolis, MN. I would like to express my love for the wild areas of Lebanon Hills and to ask that you send the Lebanon Hills Master Plan back to Dakota County for citizen participation.</p> <p>I support initiatives to make the Twin Cities more bike-able. But there are endless places that could be paved to achieve this. Lebanon Hills is truly a rare treasure in our metro. Many find solace in it. There is value in letting some little pieces of nature alone and allowing people to walk out into it.</p>
62	Matt Hannah	6/27/15	<p>Another environmentalist here hoping to keep the bike trails out of Lebanon. I support bikes one hundred percent. It's the paving inside the park I dislike. Please open the planning to public participation.</p>
63	Susan Klug	6/27/15	<p>I do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Send the plan back for meaningful citizen participation.</p>
64	Katie Mosher	6/27/15	<p>I am deeply concerned and distressed over the Lebanon Hill's Regional Park Master plan. This plan was first released in 2013 and the opposition to it from all sides has been overwhelming against it. The plan has been scaled back due to the opposition against it.</p> <p>The main part of the plan is to add paved trails to a park that is currently pristine and unpaved. This natural and pristine landscape is a large part of the attraction for the thousands of visitors that utilize this park. Installing miles of wide paved paths thru this park will change the very soul of this park. We have more enough paved trails in the cities and not enough bare earth trails.</p> <p>The committee's reason for the pavement is to meet the needs of the disabled and elderly. I do not disagree with meeting their needs but believe an 8-10 foot paved path that allows bikes on it does not seem to meet the needs of the disabled who also would rather enjoy a more natural path.</p> <p>On top of ruining the best park in the state is the estimated 27 million it will cost to install these trails. I don't feel this is the right use of tax dollars when there are so many other greater needs out there. The upkeep of these trails over the years will ruin any park budget.</p> <p>I am asking you to contact the Met Council and support any opposition to this costly and environmentally unsound plan.</p>
65	Rich and Jackie Cowles	6/27/15	<p>We urge you to send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful public participation, which has not yet occurred. Every indication is that the public is overwhelmingly opposed to the plan's paved connector trail. The public had an opportunity to comment on the plan after the fact, but most of the comments were disregarded.</p>

66	Lisa Pugh	6/27/15	<p>I am a permanent resident of Apple Valley though I spend most of my year leading wilderness expeditions in Ely, MN. I grew up spending much of my free time exploring Lebanon Hills. I chose to spend my time there as a teenager because it was quiet place where I could be alone or with my dog and experience a real connection with myself and nature. I found that unless my family was taking a trip to the cabin that weekend, Lebanon Hills was really the only place I could meet those needs for solitude and reflection in the city. In fact, having that space available has greatly influenced by direction in life and career. I still make it a point to visit every time I am in the metro which is at least 4 times a year.</p> <p>I do not support Dakota County's new plan for Lebanon Hills and request the plan be sent back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation. Lebanon Hills is a gem and would be severely and negatively impacted by further development.</p>
67	Charlotte Tuhy	6/28/15	<p>I am urging you to reject the plan that you are in the process of reviewing. It needs to be sent back to Dakota County for citizen participation. There is much revision needed.</p> <p>(Commenter is the Executive Director High Tail Horse Ranch & Rescue Hawley, MN)</p>
68	Nancy Heuer	6/28/15	<p>I am a citizen of Eagan Minnesota and I do not agree with Dakota County's new plan for Lebanon Hills. It is not the best choice for the environment, tax payers or our future generations.</p> <p>The plan was developed and approved by the county without an opportunity for meaningful citizen participation in the process.</p> <p>A significant majority of citizens do not agree with or approve of the plan submitted to the Met Council.</p> <p>Please send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p>
69	Mary & Bob Kanuit	6/28/15	<p>I have been following the destruction of Spring Lake Reserve, and I find it disgraceful!! Such beauty destroyed. Natural Indian faces blown to smithierines. Upset habitat. Family's losing their homes of generations. For what?? A 28 million bike trail that the citizens have opposed??</p> <p>Then there is the FACT that our elected officials have systematically silenced the voices of people!!</p> <p>We do not need more pavement, what we need is more peace and quiet. I for one need this nature in order to connect. This is my church!! Please make the right choice. Choose Serenity and natural over paved and unnatural. Please think this through!!</p>
70	Aaron and Robin Voreis Gregg and Clark too	6/28/15	<p>For as long as I can remember, our family has enjoyed the "wilderness in the city" that is Lebanon hills. My parents brought me there and now I bring my kids there. We have to drive past many paved parks to get to Lebanon and it is the unique wilderness qualities of the park that draw us to it in all seasons. There is plenty of pavement in the world, do not add any to Lebanon hills park! I hope my children are able to bring their children to the same wild Lebanon Hills park as my parents brought me to!</p> <p>We support a long-term park vision that respects the wilderness-character of Lebanon Hills established in the framework and guidelines of the park's past master plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing natural resource stewardship and preservation of wildlife habitat.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting minimal development – only that which is necessary for nature based recreation. • Building community based partnerships with volunteer groups and outdoor organizations. • Promoting the park as a unique destination with programming to support a natural park.
71	Barry Johnson #1.	6/29/15	<p>I urge you to take a common-sense approach to the 2015 Master Plan for Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>Common sense demands that you reject this flawed plan as written and require Dakota County to review and redesign a plan that incorporates meaningful citizen input and demonstrates strong environmental stewardship for the park now and in the coming decades.</p> <p>The current plan does not do that. Citizen input (such as it is) was carefully and cynically molded to result in the foregone conclusion of the Parks department and the County Commissioners.</p> <p>There is widespread opposition to their massive "bulldoze and build" plan.</p> <p>The most important risk is the permanent damage to the park that will be done. A secondary but real risk exists. Met Council leaders are smart enough to understand they cannot continue to make decisions that run directly counter to citizen sentiment. If valid polling were done, it would no doubt show your reputation is at an all-time low. Approving the flawed 2015 Master Plan in the face of strong citizen opposition could be a tipping point for the view that the Met Council is heavy-handed and needs to change.</p> <p>I hope you will make the right decision in the face of both risks.</p>
72	Barry Johnson #2	6/29/15	<p>Hi Ms Younquist,</p> <p>Thanks for the response. I my view (and many other share it) the Met Council should reject the plan for failure to (your words) "balance(ing) the need to provide recreation opportunities for all residents and preservation of the natural resource base.</p>
73	Julie Jones	6/29/15	<p>I am appalled at Dakota County’s plan to insert a 6-mile, 8-foot-wide, multiuse, flat asphalt trail through the interior of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Legacy \$\$ are meant to save our valuable natural areas, not destroy them. Not sure where you get the idea that the people want this when I have not heard one vote in favor of it from my fellow citizens. The only one’s who seem to want it are you officials who supposedly represent our votes. How is that 97% of citizens AGAINST this proposal causes the majority of you to vote FOR it??</p> <p>I use this park regularly and love having our own little piece of heaven right here in Eagan.</p> <p>Please do your job by representing the people like you are supposed to and vote against this tragic proposal.</p>
74	Bill Meyer	6/29/15	<p>Counsel, please reconsider your plan to add the paved trail thru Lebanon Hills. I am a long time resident on it's border and would hate to see the intrusion on this beautiful gift of nature. Not to mention the expense to create and maintain it.</p>

75	Debra Riggs Lakeville, MN	6/29/15	To Whom It May Concern: I am a resident of Dakota County and frequent Lebanon Hills Park regularly with my 84-year-old mother. We enjoy the natural and quiet paths of the park. Please do not allow a large, paved path through the middle of the park. This is supposed to be a natural area, not a commuter's shortcut.
76	Debra Nelson (Lakeville Friends of the Environment)	6/29/15	I have a big problem with the way this proposed development was shoved down people's throats, so to speak. There was outpouring of concern by the public, <i>and</i> this concern was dismissed in favor of development. The Legacy Funds seem to be all about pavement and concrete. Who I wonder was holding hands and giggling when environmentalists like myself were sold a bill of goods. I reject the plan. I hope you will return with a big NO, and look for other ways to make the park accessible to those who want to use it. What about looking towards...natural development. One thought, very fine granite paths instead of bituminous etc. Please reject!
77	Mary Lou Wilm	6/29/15	Please send DAKota Cty's new plan back for meaningful citizen participation. I didn't vote for the Legacy funding so that it could be used to add to more pavement in the 7 county metro. We need to conserve wild spaces, habitats for all life.
78	Leslie Pilgrim	6/29/15	I am a Dakota County resident. A BIG NO to legacy money building the flat asphalt trail through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. AND A BIG NO to the trail itself. Shame on you for ignoring the majority who have spoken against this trail. We need to stop degrading natural areas--you are absolutely blind to the severity of your decision to wildlife.
79	Patricia Lueth #2	6/29/15	Jan, From your response : balancing the need to provide recreation opportunities for all residents and preservation of the natural resource base. As long as the master plan meets the criteria in the Policy Plan, I strongly believe that the irresponsible preservation of natural resources and lack of public involvement and lack of approval (see ALL comments for Spring Lake Park Reserve and Lebanon Hills Regional Park available as public record) should be grounds for the Met Council to NOT APPROVE either parks master plan. The current construction is not following the plan as communicated to the public. The tree removal taking place exceeds the percentage they claim is within the standards for a "reserve" park. I have witnessed the removal and have been told false information by the Dakota County park staff. The funding is lacking for the amount already spent and planned future costs including on going maintenance. <u>Our governing bodies should look at responsible spending.</u> An original master plan to spend 1 million with a trail on the outside of a reserve park, versus the 10 + million current estimate for a trail going through the park and intact forests IS NOT responsible for our community and public citizens that pay for these projects. Thank you for your time.

80	Kelly R. Schaefbauer	6/29/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I do not support the submitted plan; Lebanon Hills should remain a unique destination which complements the regional park system.</i> • <i>The Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners;</i> • <i>Send the master plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen engagement.</i>
81	Tripp Parker	6/30/15	<p>I live in Dakota county where Lebanon Hills is located. It's a beautiful resource. I understand the desire to make the park handicap accessible and friendly and to provide a potentially more user friendly path in the park but to what ends do we go here in destroying our natural resources? We need to retain what precious little wild reserves we have around Minnesota and the Twin Cities specifically. This park is a major attraction for those of us who live in the area and have come to appreciate sharing our lives with nature on a daily basis. It has become increasingly hard for wildlife to live in our area due to population growth and expanding use of our parks. Our area has plenty of options with paved paths for public enjoyment. This park is for the wildlife, if we want to enjoy it then it seems fair that we endure some challenges in navigating the area.</p> <p>I do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills, it doesn't represent the best interest of the park, the community or even those who use or want to use the park. The county board disregarded 97% of the general public input and two of their own commissioners recommendations. Furthermore the plan failed to properly support a sustainable solution that is not invasive and so destructive. I urge you to send the plan back to Dakota county for meaningful citizen input.</p>
82	Pat Stevesand #3	6/30/15	<p>Hi, this is Pat Stevesand and I live in Burnsville, Minnesota. And I just wanted to express my concern over the Lebanon Hills master plan. They really didn't listen to the citizens who don't want the overdevelopment of that park. So please don't approve that.</p> <p>The Commissioners just did not listen to us and there was a lot of public input that did not care for the plan. Please, you're one of our last hopes. Thank you.</p>
83	Dianne Trower	6/30/15	<p>I'm writing to ask you to stop the proposal to insert a 6-mile, 8-foot-wide, multiuse, asphalt trail through the interior of Lebanon Park.</p> <p>The park is beautiful as is, and we are rapidly ruining the beauty of Minnesota. I am a native of Iowa, and I think that too often the people of Minnesota do not appreciate all of the beauty in this state.</p> <p>So this is a request to vote NO on this proposal.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
84	Christie Soderling	7/1/15	<p>I want to register my extreme displeasure with the process of approval used by Dakota County on the pending Master Plan for Lebanon Hills. I hope you will send it back to them for a proper hearing that includes the type of citizen participation that occurred the last time the plan was updated a decade ago.</p> <p>It is very clear to me that the "Citizen's Panel" that was convened to consider the proposed plan did not adequately address the concerns of those opposed to the new trails in particular, and mere lip service was paid</p>

			<p>to those concerns. Neither were the overwhelmingly negative comments received from the greater public taken into consideration in railroading the final approval with minimal adjustments. These adjustments are also problematic in that no one can actually say what would happen, further diluting the response to public concerns. The mandate from Met Council to include <i>meaningful</i> citizen participation was simply not fulfilled. Please send the Plan back to the county.</p> <p>In addition to this very serious problem with the process used to approve an unpopular Plan, I have been extremely disappointed with the whole concept of development at Lebanon as if it were a contest to see which park can put in the most amenities to bump up their numbers. The idea that parks are natural areas and that Lebanon is a uniquely preserved example (Forever Wild, remember!), and should be celebrated as such, seems to have been lost. The use of a natural area like Lebanon for a bike trail seems enormously inconsistent with the purpose of the park. Furthermore, the plans for duplicative bike trails in the south of the river metro, particularly around the Zoo and the School of Environmental Studies, is further evidence of development for its own sake, not in the better interests of land use and the public.</p> <p>I urge you to say no to the Lebanon Master Plan update, and send it back to the County for a more inclusive review process.</p>
85	Charlotte Johnson	7/1/15	<p>I do not approve of the plan before you for the development of Lebanon Hills Park. I would like to see it remain less tamed. The plan before you would destroy so much and change the character of the park - a natural wilderness smack dab in the middle of our urban landscape. Putting in a paved path is urbanizing some of the last public wilderness/ natural space left in the city. Lebanon Hills is a unique park in that unlike many other green spaces (think Grand Rounds - Lake Harriet, Lake Calhoun, Lake Nokomis, Minnehaha Falls, along the Mississippi) in the city that are replete with paved trails, it remains a place where we can experience our surroundings naturally. What a gem in an urban area! I love especially that the wilderness and naturalness offered by Lebanon Hills is convenient and accessible to so many. Small children and many people aren't capable of walking a mile or two before reaching the "wild" parts to really experience the park. These paved trails would force such a long walk on a paved, unnatural path through a clear-cut swath before being able to get far enough into the park to get onto narrow, natural paths that let you experience the beauty and essence of the park - nature. The Dakota County Commissioners seemed to think that they would create MORE access with a paved trail, but to us that trail just would create more of an obstacle to being able to access the naturalness of the park. By the volume of letters and activism of the citizens of the area, it seems that is the public consensus as well. I don't understand why the Commissioners think they know better than the people who use the park, what would be best for us.</p> <p>There are an abundance of paved trails for biking, walking, etc. in beautiful urban parks all over our city - more than I have encountered any other place I have visited or lived. They are all convenient to get to (I know, as when I want that wide paved trail for these experiences, I go to these places - which is often). When I am looking for a quiet walk in the woods - an escape from the city and the concrete... I head to Lebanon Hills where I can immediately leave the city behind as I step onto the soft dirt path amid the trees, birds, frogs and other flora and fauna - right there at my feet - not off in the distance. I feel like PART of the wilderness, not like a foreign object</p>

			<p>confined to a path and only able to observe from a distance. It is such a gem, that I ALWAYS take my out of town guests to Lebanon Hills and they are always amazed that a city the size of ours has such a fabulous wilderness area right smack in the middle. It is valuable to have something to offer that isn't available anywhere else. We have that in Lebanon Hills. It would surely be a loss of a treasure for the entire metro area to lose the integrity of this all- natural, wild space right here in the city.</p>
86	Ruby Thorp (9 ½ years old)	7/1/15	<p>To Whom This May Concern:</p> <p>I don't appreciate your plans to make a paved path through Lebanon Hills park. Here is my questions. What about the fun paths? If you were on them with the paved path you might get run over. And I would like to be able to enjoy the park with my family and friends for many years to come. And did you think about how animals live at the park? You'll wreck their homes! Plus, what nature will be left for people to see? And just how will the road/path sharing work? Did you know that if you cut down just 1 tree you have to plant 10 in its place? So get planting. And you might as well start calling the park Lebanon flats park. Get it? Cause you'll have to flatten the hills. And you'll make the park less beautiful. I know you're smarter then this. From, Ruby.</p>
87	Kathleen Kresge	7/1/15	<p>I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills is a valuable and unique destination, which complements the regional park system, because of its wilderness aspects. The Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation. It is a gem of the city.</p> <p>We drive from Minneapolis to Lebanon Hills every Saturday and Sunday to run. No other metro (including Minneapolis & Hennepin Co) has dedicated continuous hiking trails & such beauty. We now spend \$ in Eagan rather than Minneapolis because we do all our shopping at Cub, visit the local coffee shop & Brueggers Bakery near Lebanon Hills. If you put in paved paths or change the character of the park, there would be no reason for us to drive out to Lebanon Hills twice a week.</p> <p>The original planners knew what they were doing when they separated bikes/pavement from the hikers/trails. Govener ARnie Carlson said if he receives 2 letters, he knew the topic was important. Dakota County received 690 comments from around the metro region; 97 percent were opposed to the plan. Most of the negative comments were centered around the paved trail through the park. (Star Tribune, 3/11/15).</p>

88	Susan Ferrozzo	7/3/15	<p>This is sent to object to the proposed paving of the current horse trails in Lebanon park! This is a Beautiful park for us horse enthusiasts ! PLEASE do not destroy this. Please oppose this horrible plan. There is enough paved trails all around Dakota county. Many joggers who use this park don't want to jog on pavement. Hard on joints. This would be a devastating loss of a wonderful park as it is now. Many of my horse riding friends use this park! It would also be dangerous for the horses and the users on the paved paths. They would spook the horses. Both parties could be injured. This is not a wise plan. Please look into this. I used to ride at Pine Point. Stillwater area. They have paths along side horse trails this is very dangerous. ! Bikers come up so fast and spook horses!!!! PLEASE leave Lebanon as is! Beautiful !!! When something ain't broke, don't fix it! Or you will break it !!!</p>
89	Greg A Buck	7/6/15	<p>I am writing to you regarding the proposed plans for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. As a 25 year resident of Eagan and a Dakota County taxpayer, I have almost never been actively involved with public policy at the local level.</p> <p>With the stewardship of one of our county's natural blessings at stake, this issue is different. I have seen the travesty of "improvements" to Spring Lake Park and want no part of that for Lebanon Hills. I have attended a couple of the public meetings held by Commissioners to accommodate the requirement for a public hearing. A number of thoughtful and specific suggestions concerning the bikeway were respectfully submitted, but they clearly were not deemed worthy of further consideration and did not result in any meaningful changes to the plan.</p> <p>Despite overwhelming negative citizen response and in spite of the "NO" votes from the Commissioners representing the districts within which the park resides, the revised plan with the bikeway passed.</p> <p>There is no need to rush a flawed plan to production. Getting this plan wrong will affect the park for generations. Let's get this done right for the citizens of Eagan and Dakota County.</p> <p>I respectfully recommend the Met Council send the Lebanon Hills master plan back to the county to accommodate reasonable citizen participation in the update.</p>
90	Pat Cummins	7/6/15	<p>I am a resident of Eagan and extremely concerned about the future of the Lebanon Hills Regional park due to misguided decisions by the Dakota County commissioners. I am writing to ask you to send the Master Plan back to the county for revision based on meaningful citizen participation and input. Back in 2001, I served on the Lebanon Hills Stakeholder Task Force and over the past year, though not serving on the new citizen task force, I have continued to try to engage and share information based on real experience in the park. Unfortunately, this has been difficult, they are not receptive, not listening and common sense is not prevailing. Public comment has been just that, you can comment after they have made their plans but it has no impact on their decisions, it seems to be a 'check the box' exercise. Unfortunately, despite overwhelming opposition to the revised plan (97% of the public comments received), the majority of the Dakota County Commissioners approved the plan,</p>

			<p>which is now in your hands.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is a rare, natural treasure in an urban setting, providing a variety of benefits to the community; environmental, recreational, educational, therapeutic, and economic. It is so rare to have an opportunity for a wilderness experience so close to a major metropolitan area, but Lebanon Hills delivers just that. The county commissioners are putting this at risk with this Master Plan, prioritizing development over managing the natural resources in the park and letting the potential funding categories (transportation) drive design rather than true needs. I do not feel that the commissioners have really invested the effort to understand the real impacts and problems this plan would create. As is evidenced by their shock and surprise at the mass destruction of natural environment in Spring Lake Park based on the THEIR approval of the trail plan. If they would truly engage in open dialog with stakeholders as is required, a better plan would result.</p> <p>You and your fellow Met Council members have an opportunity to correct the course for Lebanon Hills Park by sending it back to Dakota County. I hope you have had a chance to enjoy a wilderness escape in the park, if not, and you would like a personal introduction to the trails, my husband and I would be happy to show you around. Also, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.</p>
91	Karen Connolly	7/6/15	<p>Please look very closely at this proposal from Dakota County to put another paved trail through the heart of Lebanon Hills and in the process, destroy much of the wilderness that we all cherish in this park. I am a horseback trail rider who uses the current trails often. I don't understand the need to make every park totally accessible to everyone. There are countless parks with multi use trails all over the Twin Cities and surrounding area that have trails catering to bikes, hikers, handicapped folks etc.that I cannot ride in. My choices are limited already, and especially in such a nearby beautiful place. I know there will be some horse trails left in the park, but close to half of the existing ones will be gone. Please don't take more away from us to make another cloned, generic area that will cost the county and taxpayers to build not to mention maintain.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention.</p>
92	Jill Beardsley	7/6/15	<p>PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE DO NOT PAVE OVER THE HORSE TRAILS. The bike riders have access to many many other parks and trails. Bike rider can transport their "conveyance" easily and have many more opportunities in various areas. Horse riders have a great deal of prep to go through to get our horses to places that are beautiful and virtually unspoiled. So much of the whole world is being paved over for convenient access. The horse trails are dwindling. We riders enjoy the natural settings and beauty of unpaved trails. Somethings should be preserved for future generations to enjoy and I think unpaved trails could be just that.</p>
93	Anita Grant	7/3/15	<p>I am at a loss to understand why the public's concern of 97% against the proposed master plan has been overlooked and plans to continue to change usage of Lebanon Hills Regional Park! As a equestrian few parks offer equestrian trails, I regularly use and enjoy the the park. The interaction with hikers and others is enjoyable for all. The park is a diamond of the area offering something for everyone. We need more parks like this than more urban sprawl. Many wild animals call this park home, another joy of the park for all who visit. I have been delighted to meet and educate many about my Arabian horse and many have asked to take pictures with him.</p>

			<p>Enclosed is a picture of us in the park.</p> <p>I am involved in many Arabian and Equine clubs, I am President of the Arabian Horse Amateur Alliance, past president and current BOD of The Minnesota Arabian Horse Association as well as a 10 yr delegate to our national Convention. Active member of the MN Horse Council. I can speak for the members of all these clubs members, who are all extremely concerned about the redivision of the Park. If by chance I can be of any assistance in any way to stop this, please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>
94	Lisa Acker	7/3/15	<p>Please reject the current "upgrade" plan for Lebanon Hills Wilderness Park and send it back to Dakota County for further revision per public input.</p> <p>The park "improvements" will take away from the natural wilderness experience, something that continues to be less and less accessible in our urban society. At \$28 million, it's excessive at a time when household budgets are tight (I would love a complete kitchen renovation after 18+ years but can't afford it). Last, 97% of the public's feedback was against this plan. Please send the plan back to Dakota County for revisions since the people who use and pay for the park and cared enough to make their voice heard are overwhelmingly against the current plan.</p> <p>Keep Lebanon Hills a 2000 acre wilderness park which provides more natural wilderness and prairie and less concrete!</p>
95	Jeanne Gau	7/3/15	<p>I am a 23 year resident of Dakota County. Prior to that , I lived in Minneapolis near Lake Harriet. I am very opposed to the proposed 6 mile paved path carving through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. This park is unique because it is a wilderness experience , yet relatively close in to the metro area. It is an oak savannah with glacial moraine water lily dotted ponds and wild flower studded fields. I horse back rode their last week and had a large white crane/heron? fly right over me. I have seen owls in trees, fox and deer. It does not have a feel of a paved quasi city park. In the winter I used to cross country ski there. I continue to snow shoe there, pending knee surgery! We have plenty of handicapped accessible areas for people and bikers who want to be on pavement. This area is UNIQUE, and you won't get it back, once you pave it.</p> <p>Part of the de-stressing experience, is to get away from pavement and to visually see an unspoiled piece of wilderness. Also, my podiatrist informs me that people need to walk/hike on uneven soft terrain. It helps them develop their balance and is better for their feet then pounding on pavement.</p> <p>The footing is excellent for horses/people and they are more environmentally friendly and compatible with nature/animals then bikes. The same can be said for x country skiers and snow shoeing and hikers. They don't leave the footprint that pavement does. The bikers have an expensive well maintained course with amenities on the west side of the park to exercise, and they have plenty of bike paths/designated lanes etc. to race through in Dakota county. The west -end bike course retains none of the wilderness feel that the east end of the park does. It also has visibly less wildlife with the campground, bike course etc.</p> <p>How does the song go..."they paved paradise and put in a parking lot". Don't go there.....preserve this unique resource. The metropolitan area has a very high density of horses also, and diminishing terrain to ride them on.</p>

96	Richard and Mona Reid	7/3/15	We would like to express our opposition to the Lebanon Hills Master Plan you are currently reviewing and request the plan be sent back to Dakota County for further review/public input.
97	Shelia Klassen	7/3/15	<p>Please, please, please keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park the wilderness haven it is. I understand the desire to satisfy the requests of all users, but by doing so it is to the detriment of some and less than satisfactory to others. Compatibility of activities needs to be carefully considered not only for enjoyment, but also safety.</p> <p>Walking through Lebanon on unpaved trails is such a pleasant experience. A paved trail will bisect the park adversely impacting the wilderness feel. I join the ranks of hikers, wildlife watchers, cross country skiers, and horseback riders who enjoy the quiet ambience Lebanon offers.</p> <p>Lebanon is unique in that it provides miles of beautiful and diverse trails on which to horseback ride while being located in a busy metro area. It is a premier destination for horseback riders from surrounding counties and frequented by those living closer to it. Dakota County is home to a large number of horse owners. As the pressure of a growing metro area continues to stress public amenities, let us preserve the wilderness areas that remain. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
98	Nancy Strand	7/4/15	Please retain the wilderness experience afforded here by not approving Dakota County's current park officials on their changes. I believe huge numbers of Minnesota's twin cities residents do not have the means to travel further.
99	Karen Kammer	7/5/15	This is a fabulous large park. Please keep horse trails unpaved.
100	Evelina Chao (1)	7/5/15	To the Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission, As one of the many thousands of horse owners and trail riding enthusiasts in the Twin Cities area, I urge you to REJECT the new proposed plan to pave over and greatly reduce the area of horse trail currently in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. This trail system is unique because of its wilderness setting, ideal footing for horses, and because of its close proximity to the metropolitan area. The Park already provides a wonderful balance of trails for all outdoor enthusiasts, and to pave a significant part of the horse trail would not only tip this balance unfairly against horse riders, who already face diminishing trails in the face of urban development encroaching on woodlands and meadows, but destroy the beauty and serenity of the wilderness experience that Lebanon Hills Park currently offers. Please reconsider this plan with horse riders in mind!
101	Mark Dunn	7/5/15	<p>I am writing to voice my objection to the Lebanon Hills Park plan that includes the development of 6 miles of paved bicycle trails to the park.</p> <p>I have been walking over this piece of land for nearly 50 years, and have always considered it one of the primary reasons I have remained living here. I can think of no other park in the Metro area that allows one to escape from the urban/suburban surroundings and into such a large preserve of nature as well as this park does.</p> <p>Ripping up 6 more miles of trails (or worse, converting existing trails) to lay down pavement is not at all consistent with maintaining the park as a natural retreat. Surely there is some other infrastructure project far more 'necessary' that the county could spend \$28,000,000 on!</p>

			Please add me to the chorus of concerned citizens who do not want to see their park torn up this way, and please listen to the 97% of respondents, your constituency, who also object.
10 2	Liisa Ojala	7/5/15	Please save the horse trails and unpaved trails for horses and x-country skiing. There are many paved trails for bicycles already in Dakota County.
10 3	Karen Kammer	7/5/15	Please preserve the unsaved horse trails at Lebanon Hills.
10 4	Fred Bretschger (1)	7/6/15	I am writing to urge the Met Council to reject the proposed master plan for Dakota County trails at Lebanon Hills. As an observant taxpaying outdoor enthusiast, I have admired Lebanon Hills Park as a prime example of a well-conceived design that serves Minnesota citizens well by balancing multiple activities while maintaining a unique quality of wilderness preservation so close to a major metropolitan area. The trails dedicated to Horseback riding, cross country skiing and hiking are superb not only for their natural beauty, but also excellent footing conditions. To compromise these trails with any kind of asphalt path system will diminish this balance and spoil the wilderness experience. It is also unnecessary as there are many paved systems already in place nearby to accommodate wheeled activities. Expensive projects like this master plan seems like a huge waste of taxpayer dollars, especially when maintaining what you have is a far superior choice.
	Rick Graves (2)	7/6/15	Dear, Jan Youngquist, Thanks for your response. However, I feel that Dakota County Parks did not follow the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks Policy Plan. Pages 2-30 of the Metropolitan Council Regional Parks Policy plan include criteria for citizen participation in all updates: "A process to involve affected municipalities and the general public in the master planning". The general public was not meaningfully involved in the Lebanon Hills master plan update that includes the paved trails/bike paths. Instead the public was asked to comment on a plan created by staff and consultants (no citizen input into creating that plan). Folks from the area provided 690 comments to that staff and consultant created plan and 97% of those comments were against the plan and the included paved trails, yet the plan is now moving forward and is on the Metropolitan Council agenda. So, since the Dakota County plan for Lebanon Hills did not meet the citizen input criteria of the Metropolitan Council Parks Policy Plan, the Metropolitan Council should send the Lebanon Hills master plan back to Dakota County unapproved.
10 5	Marge Dunn	7/5/15	I'm writing to you as a home owner in your district and a lover of the unique environment of Lebanon Hills. I vehemently oppose the project that paves six miles of the park and bulldozes to effect this change. The current natural environment of the park is so unusual in our modern and increasingly paved world that I must speak out for its preservation. Please note my strong objection to the project as you represent district 15.
10 6	Jerry Walerak	7/2/15	As an Eagan resident for over 30 years I'd like to express my concern about the future development of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I oppose the construction of a 6-mile, asphalt, multiuse bike trail through the park because it

			<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bulldozing hills and significant tree clearance required for construction - removing miles of existing woodlands and prairies which will disrupt and fragment wildlife habitat - additional costs (more Tax Dollars) needed for construction and to keep the pavement free of snow and ice plus general maintenance costs <p>I would like to note and suggest the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - send the Plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation - The County Board disregarded 97% of public input received - hello - why isn't anyone listening? - I do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hill Regional Park - Forever Wild? not with this plan
107	Pierre J. MacGillis	7/2/15	<p>Thank you for your work to make the Twin Cities metro area a healthy, flourishing place.</p> <p>I am a citizen and homeowner who lives in NE Minneapolis. I am writing to express my views on the proposed 2015 Lebanon Hills Master Plan.</p> <p>In short, I am adamantly opposed to it and ask that you send the plan back to Dakota County so citizen input can be properly respected and included.</p> <p>I am a frequent user and supporter of local and regional parks. Lebanon Hills is a a unique destination in the metro area. So much of the metro area is developed, while Lebanon Hills Regional Park has truly maintained a bit of wilderness in the midst of a huge metro area. This wilderness character is threatened by the proposed master plan.</p> <p>This master plan is unnecessary and will result in paving through significant sections of the park. This master plan may lead to even more changes in the park that go against the will of the vast majority of stakeholders. I find it unfortunate and wrong that the overwhelming citizen input against the proposed changes (over 95%) was so disregarded. This is disrespectful to the democratic process.</p> <p>Please do not give the go-ahead to this misguided project. Keep Lebanon Hills Regional Park wild! This wildness is a precious, meaningful resource to our community.</p>
108	John Gray	7/2/15	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed development of new paved trails at Lebanon Hills Park. This park is a unique asset in that it is the only park in the metro area without significant paved trails. This results in a wilderness experience in a metro area. Public comment regarding this project has been overwhelmingly negative, a fact that Dakota county has ignored. Please do not approve funding for this project.</p>
109	Greg Pasillas	7/2/15	<p>There is an assault being planned in Dakota County and the Met Council is being set-up as a potential accomplice in it.</p> <p>The victim is totally defenseless and if not stopped, this assault will likely leave the victim scarred and defaced forever.</p> <p>The assault victim in this case is Lebanon Hills Regional Park in the Eagan, Rosemount area of Dakota County.</p> <p>The assaulting forces are the Dakota County board of Parks Commissioners. Their plan of attack is to bulldoze and clear cut a huge swath of wilderness terrine through the heart of the park, stripping away the natural environment to create an intrusive, paved, multi-use "trail" (road) that, based on huge response to county request</p>

			<p>for input, the majority of citizenry does not want. In this plan, the bulldozers will also minimize the grade of the topography in contradiction to the park's name, "Lebanon Hills". The Met Council must not condone this assault and must deny funding. The concept of "nature" has been lost by the Dakota County parks board, who, through mis-management, irresponsible decision making and dis-regard for public opinion are intent on developing and intruding upon the natural environment of the park. A recent call for public input and opinion regarding the County Commissioner's plan resulted in a huge public response, with a 97% majority of responses against it. Even so, the mis-guided parks board voted in favor of it. What happened to representative government? What part of the public "no" response don't they understand? With this vote, I feel that they have moved to express their intent of the defacing and destruction of the natural environment in Lebanon Hills Park. As county commissioners, they are charged with responsible management of critical resources and environments, such as Lebanon Hills Park. Their YES vote regarding the intent to create a paved trail in the park is anything but responsible and considerate. If such trends and actions continue, there will be little nature left to manage. They are actually so bold as to promote Dakota county parks with the current tag line "Forever Wild". However, the board's intentions are in direct contradiction to such a declaration. I feel that these actions and poor decisions (in direct contrast to public opinion) will progressively erode the natural elements and features of Lebanon Hills Park and would work to make what was a natural setting into a place where nature was lost for the sake of human encroachment. Such "development" degrades and takes away from the features that make the park significant. Dis-regarding the public majority, the commissioners are now poised to be the greatest threat to the park they have been charged to preserve and protect. They hope to move forward with their destructive plans by requesting Metropolitan Council funding. This destructive plan cannot be allowed and must be stopped, or, to paraphrase from a popular song by Ms. Joni Mitchell: "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got till it's gone", "They Paved Paradise and put up a parking lot". Please do the responsible thing, and say no to the Dakota County Parks Commissioners requests for funding for the development of Lebanon Hills Park.</p>
110	Laura Hedlund (1)	7/2/15	<p>I am writing today to urge the Met Council to be responsive to the voices calling for meaningful citizen engagement for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Dakota County used numerous promotional tools including their e-newsletter list, website, notices in the park and public buildings to ask the public to comment on the master plan for Lebanon Hills. Six hundred and ninety people responded with - 97% according to March 3, 2015 Star Tribune - opposed to the plan. The obvious option before the Met Council is to return the plan for meaningful citizen engagement. Lebanon Hills is a unique place which receives over 500,000 visitors a year. The park offers something unfortunately rare in an urban environment - an intact ecosystem. Lebanon Hills can be a signature place for people in wheelchairs. A non motorized road dodging racing bikes or slow groups of people with strollers and</p>

			<p>dogs does not offer people in wheelchairs a full experience of Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>People need nature. Bulldozing hills to make flat surfaces which require salt in the largest area of intact land in northern Dakota County will take the opportunity away for generations of humans to experience Wilderness in the City. Instead of adding yet another high-maintenance non motorized road - of which the area has ample amounts - an engaged public process is likely to achieve a vision for the park which meets the needs of people in wheelchairs in a way that honors the unique essence of Lebanon Hills.</p>
11 1	Judy Finger	6/29/15	<p>I do not support the submitted Plan from the Dakota County Commissioners. Lebanon Hills is a valuable and unique destination, which complements the regional park system, <u>because</u> of its wilderness aspects. The County logo for the park is "Forever Wild".</p> <p>The Board has consistently disregarded public input, 97 percent in the most recent comment period and two of its own Commissioners. Please send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p> <p>I have lived in Dakota County since 1974 and have used the park for hiking during that time...winter and summer. We ski there, attend community events there, have seen red fox and box turtles laying eggs. I have no objection to reasonable "improvements" to the park, but the current plan seems to run counter to the stated mission - "Forever Wild".</p> <p>The County appears happy to spend outside money; i.e., State and Federal dollars, but always seems to come up short of dollars to maintain the facilities they already have. This is a bad plan all around.</p>
11 2	Margaret Skelton (2)	7/6/15	<p>I am a resident of your District in Dakota County at 1574 Sherwood Ct., Eagan, MN. Like the majority of Dakota County residents, I do not support the submitted Plan. I wanted to urge you to listen to the majority of residents of Dakota County. I have two boys in middle school in Dakota County. Between the two of them, they are involved in Eastview hockey, EVAA travel basketball, REV soccer and Falcon Ridge track. As I spend most of my free time (especially in the winter) at sporting events with other parents, I have had an opportunity to speak with many parents that live throughout the Dakota County area. I have not found a single person in favor of this connector trail. I am absolutely convinced that there is a small minority of people who want this connector trail. This is consistent 97% of the comments received on the Master Plan. There are ample paved trails, within Dakota County parks, city-managed parks, and the adjacent parks near Thomas Lake for people to ride bicycles or for individuals with disabilities. What we don't have enough of are pristine wooded natural areas that give the feel of wilderness while being located in the suburbs.</p> <p>The draft's stated goal of "something for everyone" already exists in the multitude of park opportunities we are fortunate to have in Dakota County. What would actually be achieved by this proposal is "wilderness for no one". It's an unnecessary cost, a mistake and an irreversible loss to Dakota County residents. Further, it does not correlate to the Parks Departments motto "Forever Wild." A factor in your decision should be what the citizens of Dakota County want, we do not want this connector trail.</p>

11 3	Joe Boler	7/7/15	<p>I am a resident of Eagan, MN. I live one mile north of Lebanon Hills Park. I am an avid runner and outdoor enthusiast. I moved to Eagan in Feb of 2015 and I have been astounded by the abundance of paved trails around and throughout Eagan and Apple Valley. Both cities have paved trails not only around town but they also go through the local parks and around the lakes. Lebanon Hills is the only piece of land left in the area that is "Natural". If you move forward and install the proposed paved path in Lebanon it will ruin what the park is and it will never be the same. I frequent Lebanon Hills and use the Dirt trails to run on almost daily. Every time I am there I see other people of all kinds and genders out enjoying the dirt "natural" trails. People aside, the construction of the path will also kill off and chase away many animal species as well.</p> <p>I propose and note the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send the Plan BACK to Dakota County for Meaningful Citizen Participation <input type="checkbox"/> The County Board disregarded 97% of public input received <input type="checkbox"/> I DO NOT support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park.
11 4	Catherine Bell	7/7/15	<p>PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, preserve the horse trails in Dakota County's Lebanon Hills. I urge you to reject the master plan to pave half the horse trails leaving only 4.5 mi for horse riders like me. I have been on the trails and believe it's a horrible destructive plan of beautiful wilderness in the heart of Dakota county.</p>
11 5	Kelly Norman	7/7/15	<p>As an active rider, I am begging you to please open your eyes to not shutting down all of the beautiful horse trails that have been up at Lebanon for years! We thoroughly enjoy them and are saddened that you would take them away from us. Please reconsider what destruction you would be causing to the beautiful park to make big paved trails going through it.</p> <p>As an active runner, I also search for places to not run on paved or cement trails. It is hard on your joints and not good for running on. I ask you keep the trails as they are so that I, and many many other runners, riders and people that just want to get out into nature without making it to city like, can appreciate the trails. Please think clearly and don't go towards the money of funding something that will wreck something beautiful. People go to these trails to get away from the city, not be in it!!!</p> <p>We vote No for the paved trails and cutting down horse trails to just 4 miles. Seriously consider what you are going to wreck for many many people!!!</p>
11 6	Sheryl Sanderson	7/7/15	<p>Please reject the plan to pave half the horse trails in Lebanon Hills. As it is we have so few trails in the area for riding.</p>
11 7	Joan Grove	7/7/15	<p>Please don't consider paving any of the trails that horses go on in Dakota Cty. We like the dirt trails more than the paved</p>
11 8	Kat	7/7/15	<p>PLEASE OH PLEASE</p> <p>DO NOT TAKE AWAY OUR HORSE TRAILS.</p> <p>I want to express my right as a MN resident.... I reject the master plan to pave half the horse trails.</p> <p>I pay for a MN Equine trail pass every year. The cost of that pass goes up, an now you tell me my trail access</p>

			<p>will go down.</p> <p>PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS.</p>
11 9	Paul Danicic & Carmela Nyemetz	7/7/15	<p>Regarding the recent proposal to develop Lebanon Hills Park. I do not support the submitted plan; Lebanon Hills is a valuable and unique destination which compliments the regional park system specifically because of its wilderness character.</p> <p>The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Please send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p> <p>This kind of undeveloped space will only become more and more valuable each year. New studies are consistently showing that value to our children, how time in natural spaces increases learning ability and cognitive function. As our population becomes more urban in general, we need these open, undeveloped spaces not only for human enjoyment but to maintain large tracts of undeveloped ecosystems for important species habitat.</p>
12 0	Mike and Betty Fedde	7/8/15	<p>The Lebanon Hills Regional Park plan for 2015 is unacceptable to the vast majority of northern Dakota County residents. The process has been one of manipulation and basically not listening. The plan needs to go back to Dakota County for meaningful public direction as the public has been ignored. After the latest version was completed the comments were 97% against out of 690 submitted. The massive destruction is irresponsible. The Spring Lake Park travesty which is being completed now has resulted in massive destruction of river bluffs, hills, forests to dig a big ditch with occasional expensive views of the river. The Lebanon Hills plan is as bad and has no public support. Please spend our tax dollars on something for the majority - not for lobbyists as this apparently is for.</p>
12 1	Mimi Tung	7/8/15	<p>I urge you to send the latest master plan for Lebanon Hills back to Dakota County for revisions and re-considerations based on <u>meaningful inclusion of citizens' and stakeholders' input</u>.</p> <p>Although Dakota County heard from many stakeholders - Dakota County citizens and Twin Cities residents who care about and/or are users of the park - 5 of the 7 Dakota County Commissioners chose to ignore the stakeholders' input and voted yes on the plan. I don't understand the rationale of their action; I'm beginning to wonder "what's in it for them"....</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is a rare treasure in the Twin Cities. It is rare because of its size and relative "wildness" (and let's not forget, Dakota County's slogan for its parks is "forever wild") right in the middle of a dense metropolitan area. We need to preserve the unique character of Lebanon Hills. Why are we trying to make Lebanon Hills into a park just like other existing parks? There are many other parks with paved trails already, e.g., Minneapolis' Chain of Lakes trails. While I enjoy the Chain of Lakes trail, I go to Lebanon Hills for a different experience. How fortunate for us Twin Cities residents to have such a rich variety of parks for our recreation and enjoyment! I hope you will review all the letters, emails, and letters to editors on this topic. It will be evident that approving this plan is the wrong thing to do environmentally and in the context of all the parks in the Twin Cities</p>

			Metropolitan area.
12 2	Kelley Dean	7/7/15	<p>1. Lebanon Hills is a precious and beautiful slice of wilderness unique in its close proximity to the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Hikers, skiers, snow-shoers, as well as horseback riders currently enjoy this uniquely natural, close-to-wildlife trail network. The new master plan proposes to pave right through this trail in order to increase riding area for bikers, who already have 11 miles of dedicated bike paths in Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>2. To pave additional area would be to destroy forever dwindling areas of natural woodland, marsh, and wildlife habitat. Bikers, who already have dedicated, paved paths throughout the Twin Cities (as well as in Lebanon Hills), do not mix well with foot traffic or horseback riders. Please keep our paths free from more pavement, and safe for feet.</p> <p>3. Quality of Life is a Minnesota point of pride! Preservation of precious natural woodland, waterways and meadows is essential to Minnesota's image of the great outdoors, and why people enjoy living here. Paving is to further urbanize the few oases of natural wilderness remaining in the Twin Cities. Preserve, don't pave!</p> <p>Please don't let the song lyrics, "they paved Paradise," ring true for our beautiful Lebanon Hills.</p>
12 3	Mary Buck	7/7/15	<p>In the Park Overview of the Lebanon Hills Master Plan it identifies "Lebanon Hills Park as ...renowned trail based park - hiking, running, skiing, horse riding, mountain biking, and canoeing..." yet the Master Plan chooses to pave over portions of the bridle path.</p> <p>I moved to Minnesota in 2001 from Cleveland, Ohio and am currently a Bloomington resident. My horse is boarded in Webster, MN. The longer I live here the more I see Minnesotans squeezing out the horse population in favor of large home developments, trail riding paths through the park and other areas in which horse owners can enjoy the outdoors.</p> <p>It appears that Minnesota's newest trend is to favor the bicyclist. Bike paths are popping up along all major roads and arteries for commuters and that is a wonderful thing. Between Three Rivers Park District, Lebanon Hills and other county park systems bicyclist trails outnumber the bridle paths, yet Dakota County wishes to take away more from the equine community.</p> <p>A well trained horse can interact with bicycles provided the rider is confident. However, the rider also understand that their horse's brain is wired for flight when it feels threatened. If the rider is not confident the horse loses confidence in the rider and becomes alert to possible dangers. Because bicycles are quiet their approach to a horse can be quite startling. Horses do not look back at their riders to let them know they are about to jump sideways, rear, buck or any movement involved in flight. Those first few steps a horse takes can be in any direction and can unseat the best riders, the worst riders or crash into the bicyclist. Not only could all parties involved incur medical bills, there is also the chance of veterinarian bills.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is the most beautiful park to ride horses. It is the first place I have ever ridden in Minnesota that reminds me of the Metro Parks in Cleveland, Ohio. There the paths go on for miles and miles through the park system with little to no interaction with vehicles or bicycles. Unless you are a horse person, there is no possible</p>

			<p>way you can understand how riding your horse in the park washes away the stress of the work week, or can end that bad day on a peaceful and relaxing note. By adding bicycle paths along the horse trails denies riders that peace of mind.</p> <p>I have seen bicyclist ignore the designated bridle paths in Murphy-Hanrehan park. My 50 year old friend who has been riding since she was 5 and her daughter (who has been riding for 7 years) were startled by a bicyclist. They were on a hill when the bike approached from behind. My friend's horse spooked, bucked and slid sideways down the hill which sent my friend through the air, landing hard on the ground and hitting her head. Her daughter's horse took off running. The bicyclist never stopped to see if they were ok or to offer a hand to my friend who was injured. Once a horse is startled, it takes them about 20 minutes to return to a calm state.</p> <p>Because of her injuries my friend had to walk 2 startled horses back home while her daughter was scared over the episode and was afraid of her mom being seriously injured.</p> <p>Never once have I seen a bicycle spook and toss its rider because it has seen a horse. For these reasons and all the others you have heard from horseback riders, I implore you to keep bicycles away from the horse paths. Please stop taking away from the equine community to add to the already expansive bicycle paths in Minnesota.</p>
12 4	Mary Imhoff	7/7/15	<p>In viewing the Spring lake Park Reserve completed near Hastings, it confirms my belief that if you give the hand, they take the entire arm!! The leveling of the earth was horrific! About half the work of the plan was completed, (thank heavens more wasn't completed) at almost twice the projected cost. As being a small business person, that is not possible for us, we can't have over runs and charge it back to the customer. I'm appalled that elected officials do not listen to their constituents. I am weary of beautiful natural areas being bulldozed over, trees cut down, earth leveled, to accommodate the desire for convenience or recreation. Why can we not leave the beauty of God's creation the way it is, why mess with it?</p> <p>I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills is a valuable and unique destination which compliments the regional park system because of its wilderness character. The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p>
12 5	Brenda Leatherman	7/9/15	<p>I do not support the revised master plan for Lebanon Hills Park. The proposed paved trail through the park will destroy the unique environment that Lebanon Hills provides to the Twin City area. Please ask the Dakota County Board to revise the plan based on public input.</p>
12 6	Laura Hedlund (2)	7/9/15	<p>Can we, as a community, move towards a shared and inclusive vision for Lebanon Hills Regional Park? Perhaps we can even come up with win/win before the Met Council process begins on August 4. Hopetimistic.</p> <p>Below are some thoughts.</p> <p>An inclusion working group. Improve access for people in wheelchairs using the existing framework of the 2001 master plan. Hard surface trails near the visitors center have broad appeal. My understanding is that these asphalt trails can be constructed without a new master planning process.</p> <p>Accessible, non-asphalt trail, in the interior of the park. Bike access could be considered as part of the</p>

			<p>Greenway concept. Jack Conrad pointed out that Cliff Road expansion would be a natural place to consider bike access thru the park. Most bikers want a pleasant ride with nice landscaping but they realize the ecological expense of going thru the interior of the park with what is essentially a non-motorized road. Also, the Minneapolis Park system has wisely decided to separate walkers from bikers for safety reason. It is an improved experience to separate walkers and bikers. An inclusive working group could take a critical look at Lebanon Hills Regional Park entire trail system thru an accessibility as well as ecological lens. We can create a signature accessible wooded trail which matches and honors the fundamental character of Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>Inclusion program/activities group. Innovative programs to reach out to people who are currently not served by Dakota County has potential to connect people with ecological reality. A program group could explore options such as partnering with Metro Mobility to make regular visits to places with people who struggle with mobility including residential and nursing homes. This group could also explore reaching out to other underserved communities including recent immigrants, low income single parent families, African-Americans, Latino, Indigenous communities, teenagers, etc. The idea is that this working group would have flexibility to learn, “response-ability” to find creative ways for public. Outreach. I have passion in this area and I am willing to volunteer on park outreach.</p> <p>Ecological. The current master plan has clear and ambitious goals for restoring the park. Progress is being made. Most notably, 50 volunteers worked on garlic mustard. Keeping the strong vision of the 2001 master plan is consistent with community vision. For example in numerous surveys from the county, tackling buckthorn was more important than building trails.</p> <p>Utilize Elisabet Sahtouris’ Principles of Healthy Living Systems. Master plans exist in stagnant frameworks which may not serve rapidly changing communities. Can Dakota County use the 2001 master plan for funding requests? I now believe, that I cannot be fully human without being in relationship with “intact ecological reality.” What is “intact ecological reality?” We know it when we feel it. We need to identify the remnant land and honor these places not only from human-centric pathways of what can I extract NOW for ME. A biocentric, regenerative, future first viewpoint as well as human thought pathways serve present and future needs of humans by embracing humans within the context of the living world. Madonna when she sang “I am a Material Girl Living in a Material World.” Is wrong. This website has information: http://interactioninstitute.org/features-of-healthy-living-systems</p> <p>Below is a photo my friend shared with me of a buckthorn fence... Can you feel this place? [cid:1efd740b-36c8-43d3-b3a0-b7381a9c96a3@am950.Local]</p>
12 7	Todd Hipp	7/9/15	<p>While I don’t understand all the nuances regarding the Dakota County Lebanon Hills Project, I do however understand that most people, including myself are not comfortable with the current plan. Perception and reality can be two different things, but to me it seems so blatant that the majority of the public doesn’t accept the plan. Anyway, I just wanted to voice a comment about the issue and ask that you please consider sending the proposed plan back to Dakota county until they can reach a plan that works for most people in the community, because I’m not even seeing that 50% like the way it reads now.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p>

128	Dee Parker	7/10/15	<p>Please do NOT approve the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan.</p> <p>Keep the "Wilderness in the City" feeling of this park.</p> <p>Despite overwhelming opposition to this plan, it was approved by the Dakota County Commissioners.</p>
129	Arnie Austin	7/10/15	<p>Please don't add paved trails to Lebanon Hills Park... I love Minnesota with my heart and soul, and the wonderful NATURAL parks are the biggest draw of all. Please, don't add paved trails.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills is a precious and beautiful slice of wilderness unique in its close proximity to the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Hikers, skiers, snow-shoers, as well as horse-back riders currently enjoy this uniquely natural, close-to-wildlife trail network. The new master plan proposes to pave right through this trail in order to increase riding area for bikers, who already have 11 miles of dedicated bike paths in Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>2. To pave additional area would be to destroy forever dwindling areas of natural woodland, marsh, and wildlife habitat. Bikers, who already have dedicated, paved paths throughout the Twin Cities (as well as in Lebanon Hills) do not mix well with foot traffic or horse-riders.</p> <p>3. Quality of Life is a Minnesota point of pride! Preservation of precious natural woodland, waterways and meadows is essential to Minnesota's image of the great outdoors, and why people enjoy living here. Paving is to further urbanize the few oases of natural wilderness remaining in the Twin Cities. Preserve, don't destroy our great outdoors!</p>
130	Kate Ness	7/10/15	<p>Please do not accept the new plan for Lebanon Hills as it will be presented in August. Not only will it destroy a wonderful park, but it is a complete waste of taxpayer money. This is not what the voters wanted when they voted for the Legacy Fund.</p> <p>If you choose to support the plan, please explain why you are willing to go against what 97% of the public has demanded.</p>
131	Maryann Passe	7/15/15	<p>I urge you to tell Dakota County to redo their Lebanon Hills Master Plan. The public does not support this proposal, there were 690 individual public comments- NO FORM LETTERS - opposing this change in direction for this beloved park.</p> <p>The county has full-time planning staff, full-time communications staff, full-time administration staff, who did all they could to ensure that this plan was approved. Yet intense grass-roots public pressure continued throughout the entire process. People continued to take the time to communicate to the county their displeasure with the plan. In the end, County Commissioners disregarded the public input and voted for this new plan that so violates the past park master plan.</p> <p>Still, people like me, are taking the time to oppose Dakota County's plan at the Metropolitan Council level. Why? Because of Dakota County's appalling record of park stewardship. Lebanon Hills Regional park natural resources have been neglected for years despite its master plan directives to prioritize its natural resources. More disturbing is the County's master plan for Spring Lake Park that is being completely violated by the current construction project of what can only be called a road through its "preserve area."</p>

			<p>I urge you to listen to the public. Lebanon Hills is a unique and complementary piece in the entire regional park system. It offers the opportunity for people of all abilities to enjoy a conveniently located large parkland with minimal infrastructure. It should be "developed" as that kind of a park, NOT developed to be a bike system hub where only the fit and able can get beyond the pavement.</p> <p>This park, should offer everyone, of every ability the chance to get away from pavement. That is what the public has been telling Dakota County. They have not listened to the public as they did everything they could to manage and control public input into the plan - see below my letter to the editor in Sun Thisweek.</p> <p>Read the letter to the editor below and then reject Dakota County's proposed Lebanon Hills Master Plan.</p>
13 2	Becky and Ed Evans	7/14/15	<p>My husband and I would like to voice our displeasure at your proposal to pave a 6 mile trail through Lebanon Hills park, and what's worse, using Legacy Amendment money to do it. We live very close to the Eagan-Apple Valley border and enter the park every day through the entrance on Galaxie Avenue, which is 2 blocks from our home of 30 years. There are miles of paved trails and sidewalks in our southern suburbs already that enable those in wheelchairs, strollers and bikes to enjoy an outing surrounded by nature. We have already witnessed many huge living trees cut down there to widen the ski trails--it's heartbreaking! Please consider the survey results on this subject and our comments to halt this proposed project!</p>
13 3	W. Barry Graham	7/15/15	<p>I do not support the submitted Plan. Lebanon Hills Regional Park is a valuable and unique destination which complements the regional park system because of its wilderness character. The County Board did not solicit comments or recommendations on the final Master Plan by the Dakota County Planning Commission. Instead, the County Board, with input from Dakota County planning staff, appointed a Citizens Advisory Panel which was not representative of the park's user groups or the citizens of the County. The County-selected facilitator restricted discussion and allowed comments and recommendation on a very limited number of issues in the Master Plan. Finally, the County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input during the comment period allowed, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p>
13 4	Karen Gamble	7/16/15	<p>I am writing to you regarding Lebanon Hills Regional Park. I live in the city – surrounded by freeways, concrete, noise, pollution, buildings, etc. It is refreshing to have a park in the middle of all this congestion, to have a park where a person can go to unwind, relax and enjoy the beauty of nature. Why is it being proposed to tear down paradise? We already have plenty of paved trail parks in the metro area. I am opposed to the plans being proposed to alter the park. People go to this park because it is a refreshing alternative to the mundane, paved parks. We need a unique, nature-based park to enjoy in the heart of the city.</p>
13 5	Laura Hedlund (3)	7/17/15	<p>Democracy is not a spectator sport. It is participation. Hundreds of people have spoken out against the plan to pave lebanon hills. People engaged at open houses, public comments, and letter to the editors. Overwhelmingly negative comments -97% according to startribune. What specifics? Some adaptations have been made however the 97% disapproval rate came after these</p>

			<p>adaptions.</p> <p>What are the broad implications? Unresponsive government fragments the social fabric. It feels disheartening. People become cynical! This was Paul main message - dont let them make you cynical. I had the privilege of being Deputy Press Secretary on his first campaign.</p> <p>We can be at the beginning of a restorative cultural movement. The earth is the grounding force. Contact with soil - not toxic asphalt - may be key to social healing.Public space is the commons. Many indigenous culture had practices on consensus building. If we learn from these traditions we can also learn to operate in healthy and healing ways.</p> <p>I am glad Sandy is willing to take a stand. If Met Council approves the plan, then the issue is likely to be key in the 2016 elections.</p>
13 6	Wendy Paulson	7/18/15	<p>I write to you regarding Dakota County's Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful attention to this matter.</p> <p>For more than two years the County has been pushing their version of a Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Park without listening to their constituents. To be clear, there have been a number of public meetings and comment periods, but the comments of the public have repeatedly been clear and have not been heeded. Commissioners Egan and Schouwiler commented eloquently and clearly on this in explaining their change of heart (at the 3/10/15 and 3/17/15 meetings).</p> <p>Commissioner Schouwiler pointed out how she was taken aback by the fact that of the most recent opposition - not only that 97% of almost 700 comment were against the plan, but that almost every comment was entirely personally written - people did not follow form letters - they followed their hearts!</p> <p>This type of government action is a sad yet crystal clear example of why citizens are frustrated with and alienated from government. Please do not let this continue, stop this plan.</p> <p>At the March 2015 Dakota County meetings, the commissioners voted on a few meaningless changes to the plan (changing the paved path from 10' width to an 8' width, for example). However, through extensive research by Wilderness in The City Volunteers, it is clear that despite any lip service, the width and the exact location of the trail will always remain at the County's full discretion. Thus, there have been numerous open houses, public comment periods, and time spent of discussing what the public would like, without any requirement for the county to heed wishes, and more significantly without input from landscape designers or engineers.</p> <p>In official county meetings I have seen a <i>very</i> disturbing lack of clear knowledge on important information. At the two public county meetings mentioned above, Commissioner Workman repeatedly asked if they made any of the proposed changes (with of trail, location, etc), would ADA requirements still be met? There was a palpable silence in the room each time with NO response from Senior Park Staff (Steve Sullivan, 3/10 and 3/17 meetings), hired consultants (3/10 meeting), or from the County Attorney (present at both meetings). No comments were made by anyone at all. YET THEY CONTINUED WITH THEIR VOTES, changing the plan slightly.</p>

		<p>I have been passing out fliers at the park for the past few months to education people about this plan and the responses I receive when I talk to people have contained a very consistent few themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The person knew nothing of the plan and finds it very upsetting.2. The person knew about the plan, but figured nothing could be done because the county is set in their plan and will prevail.3. Most of them ask where is the money really going or state that they know this project is all about money. <p>To be honest, it seems there has been intentional obfuscation of information during this process: Just before the final vote by the county commissioners (3/17) to approve this plan, I stopped by the visitor center. NO one there knew what the current status of the plan was or how to find out. The woman working told me people repeatedly asked what was going on with the park and she did not know how to get information on what to tell them, nor did her boss.</p> <p>The visitor center should have been Ground Zero for people trying to understand what the County's plan is, yet it had not been.</p> <p>Further the County and Plan provide great Lip Service to the value of natural resources, however they had NO employees working in Natural Resources at the Park until after repeated citizen complaints. This is one place they have listened to the public. Suddenly 4 employees were hired or changed jobs. Somehow the county cannot include long term funding into this \$28 million dollar plan, yet they can newly have 4 Natural Resource employees? I appreciate the new employees and have found them great to work with, but am concerned about how long will this last?</p> <p>This paved trail - the most controversial part of this plan - just does not make sense - for it to be truly accessible in winter, will require plowing. For a park that is known for cross country skiing, having to cross a paved trail is going to markedly degrade the skiing experience.</p> <p>And the trail is billed as accessible for the disabled, elderly, and children while also being designed for 20 mph speeds of bicyclists. Basic logic leads to the conclusion that accessibility will be highly compromised by high speed bicyclists. If the trail is designed for 20 mph speeds (mentioned throughout the Plan), there is no way to deny there will be occasional higher speeds too. As an amateur cyclist, I repeatedly reach 25 mph speeds.</p> <p>There are no bikes allowed in the center or east sections of the park now, yet the county is already unable to keep bikes out. I have routinely found tracks and people biking, especially in the central section.</p> <p>A former police officer spoke at one of the county meetings, explaining how if this trail is built, he knew the police were going to be called in to remove motorcycles and cars. I can testify that they are not keeping out bikes now. The best case scenario if this trail is built, is that motors will not be an issue; but it is certain that bikes will be all over other park trails - where they are not supposed to be. There are <i>never</i> county employees on these trails to</p>
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			<p>monitor or regulate bike use and there is nothing in this plan to start park patrols. Further, the signage in the park is still incomplete following the implementation of the last Plan (2001 Master Plan). There are numerous locations where signs state a trail is closed on one end, but there is no sign at the other end. This was how well the trails were completed in the last Plan: it is hard to trust they would do a better job this time.</p> <p>There is so much work the park could use now - there is a wonderfully quaint bridge across Bridge pond - please, go see it! Its absolutely amazing that this bridge was not included in this plan or any plan for repair - it's like walking in a haunted house! There are always trails eroding into lakes (even after last night's 1" rainfall, I found a couple channels of dirt flowing into Holland Lake) and there are ponds that are infilling and the invasive species... There is no one who can claim that a paved trail and all the ensuing construction and equipment required will do anything but damage to the natural resources (requiring chemical herbicides, increasing invasive plants, increasing run-off and water temperature, for example). Given the lack of care for the natural resources of the park currently, it is hard to believe it will be well attended to after further destruction. Garlic mustard, for example, has taken over in the past 5 years and it is the opinion of many that had there been attention to it right away, it would have required relatively little effort. Where now extensive volunteer, employee, and prisoner efforts are going to be at it for years to come.</p> <p>Please understand though that I love this park and would not complain about the bridge or the the other things need immediate repair. If nothing were to be done at all - No Master Plan - the park would be just great. However, if we're going to spend \$28 million, then I am completely at a loss to understand why these existing issues have been ignored. It seem to me only a few conclusions are possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a.) those who wrote the plan and voted for it know little to nothing about the park,b.) they do not care about the park and simply want the money - somehow it increases their status as commissioners or they have a connection to the contractors who have worked on the plan or will work on the implementation. <p>Lebanon Hills is a valuable destination in the regional park system because of its unique wilderness character; I do not support the submitted Plan. Dakota County disregarded 97% of general public input, and two of their own Commissioners. I urge you to send the Plan back to Dakota County for <u>meaningful citizen participation</u>.</p> <p>This park is Unique and this uniqueness must be highlighted, not destroyed. It is a quiet, peaceful park, where one can find quiet and separation from the speed of the city. Adding a paved bike trail will destroy this and change the character of the park completely!</p> <p>This plan is full of gigantic holes and should NOT BE FUNDED or approved in any way.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
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13 7	Jean Oberle	7/19/15	<p>LHRP is highly valued by the Twin Cities community for its rustic atmosphere. The vision held by many for LHRP over the years has been for a less developed, predominately natural park. This community vision is coming into direct conflict with the proposed Master Plan. The underlying concern being that this unique park will be overdeveloped and the highly valued natural resources will be negatively and irreversibly impacted. There are thoughtful yet unexplored ways to integrate accessibility into Lebanon Hills, while maintaining a less developed, rustic atmosphere. The 6 mile connector trail is not the answer, and is the biggest stumbling block to gaining widespread support.</p> <p>While a great deal of time and effort has gone into developing the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan, and I had sincerely hoped to be able to support it at this point, the process falls short of expectations. A very significant number of people took the time to submit personal letters voicing objections and concerns during the public comment period. If citizen participation and input is to be truly embraced, and the process to be trusted, the plan should not be approved for funding in its current form. Without widespread support, and confidence that the community truly was given a voice, the implementation will continue to be problematic. I urge you to send the Master Plan back to Dakota County for further refinement.</p>
13 8	Mike Capra	7/10/15	<p>Please do not fund the Lebanon Hills paving project until the Dakota County planning commission actually listens to the citizens of the county. They are pushing through this project with very little citizen support .</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration</p>
13 9	Susan and Steven Wehrenberg	7/11/15	<p>We are writing because we are against clearing a 6-mile, 8-foot swath through Lebanon Hills Regional Park. We feel this kind of destruction of a natural setting is not good use of Legacy funding.</p> <p>Please vote against the Dakota County commissioner's proposal, which is opposed by a majority of we Dakota County residents.</p>
14 0	James Jenkins	7/22/15	<p>I was an active member of the Stakeholders's Task Force for developing the 2001 Master Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. In 2001 at the direction of the Dakota County Commissioners and through a collaborative process with 26 Stakeholders, we developed an excellent Master Plan that was adopted by the County Commissioners with full support. When the plan was adopted, the Board pledged to enforce this plan and uphold it's overarching vision to be different than all of the other regional parks in the system and clearly emphasize that this park would remain natural and hard development would be minimized. It would not include development that would result in destroying the natural vegetation and topography on this beautiful park. It would remain unique in providing the natural environment that the majority of the park users wanted.</p> <p>During the next decade the Parks Planning Department immediately and continually developed plans for hard development versus maintaining, rehabilitating and developing the natural features of this park. During the period from 2002 until last year, many surveys were completed and over 90% of the individuals surveyed still favored the vision of the 2001 Plan: to keep this park unique and natural. Even after this input the Parks Department and Commissioners ignored this data and continued on the path of hard development that is represented in the Development Plan that is before you at this time for approval.</p>

			<p>Make no mistake, the last round of input by a public committee initiated by the Commissioners, was not a balanced, objective form of input, but was simply furthering the direction already in motion. The current Commissioners that were part of the 2001 process and pledged to enforce the Master Plan know the current Development Plan is not close to being consistent with the plan they endorsed in 2001.</p> <p>In conclusion, I appeal to the Metropolitan Council; return this to the county unapproved and insist that they revise their Development Plan so that it is consistent with the 2001 Master Plan that they endorsed and promised to enforce. This is clearly what the park users want.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p>
14 1	Pat Rammal	6/24/15	<p>(on Council voicemail)</p> <p>He feels/heard most people responding to survey were not interested. He wanted to reiterate his non-interest in a paved bike trail through Lebanon Hills.</p>
14 2	Evelina Chao (2)	7/5/15	<p>She voiced opposition to new paved trails through Lebanon Hills for bikers. She feels they already have 11 miles of dedicated paved trails and to pave additionally through the current trails for foot traffic, skiers, cross-country skiers, snowshoeing, hikers and horseback riders is to take away and upset the balance of what is really beautiful natural woodland and will destroy the final remaining wilderness that we have. She feels this plan is misguided and asked that we please reject this plan.</p>
14 3	Linda Knutson	(date unknown)	<p>She does not support the Lebanon Hills Master Plan. She feels Lebanon Hills is one of the few parks left that is still wilderness. It doesn't have paved trails and she stated we have tons of parks with paved trails. She thinks we need to stop developing every park around us and leave some to be more wilderness. She feels community folks selected to be on the board did not have much say or what they did say was disregarded as was the public comments received and even the views of some of the commissioners on the board. This is really disheartening.</p>
14 4	Fred Bretschger (1)	7/6/15	<p>He urges the Met Council to reject the proposal to pave over many dedicated natural trails in Lebanon Hills Regional Park. He thinks it's a very bad idea since bike traffic already has 11 miles of dedicated bike paths nearby. He said this will upset the beautiful balance of the park which is perfect for hiking, horseback riding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and feels this park is a nice footing for all those activities. He stated it is a beautiful natural wilderness and stated we shouldn't mess it up by putting in all those bike paths and upsetting the whole wilderness feel. This is just urbanizing one of the few remaining natural spots close to the city. He asked that we please don't wreck it.</p>
14 5	Susan Bitzan	7/27/15	<p>I have been going to Lebanon Hills for over eight years. During this time I have enjoyed running and walking through the trees. As a runner, running on the ground is better for your</p> <p>Joints than the bike/walk trails you have on (most) highways. During my eight years. I have seen many families take their kids on walks. Teaching them about the animals they see. They get to see many bunnies. They get to see turtles lay their eggs on the path. Some frogs (which are seldom) anywhere. I have seen wild turkeys and hundreds of deer. Evan saw an albino squirrel.</p>

			<p>Many families come to fish, and a family picnics and take a walk on the trails. Many groups of runners come and run. This is because they know the ground is so much better for running, it gives them a challenge going up and down the path's.</p> <p>If you take this all away. Where can these people enjoy nature? We have bike trails – walking paths on every street highways. Yes! At first you may have many bikers, but they like to adventure different places. So down the years there won't be as many.</p> <p>Where will all the people park? Where will the families, whom like to take walks with their kids go?? They won't want to compete with bikers.</p> <p>You redid the bike path on Jonny Cake. I use to walk and run there. However; with the change. I can't find a place to park. Many people park on the grass, which we all know is a no no.</p> <p>You made the parking in a circle, this makes it harder to drive around, than if you made a parking area for malls. Your idea, may have been to make it look more appealing. Do you really think people who come to bike care how appealing it looks? NO! all they want to do is bike.</p> <p>I use to run on Johnny cakes trail, before you changed it. Now, you took away the entrance path for people to walk/run. You don't care to clear some areas on the path for people to keep walking. I have had to climb or trees, finding paths are only twelve inches wide to walk/run.</p> <p>Why would you want to spend \$28 million to change nature?????? Why not take some of this money and improve several parks. Ask people whom go to parks, see what improvement you can do. This is all about families.</p> <p>My other advice is to take some of this money and put it in to the bike path on Jonny Cake. Families come there. Reopen the parking you closed. Make a trail there for bikes/walking</p> <p>If families want to use a tar path. Some family members may want to tale the rough challenging trails, while the others may want to do the slow biking. Have another restroom area on the North side. To me this would mean so much more for families.</p> <p>All I can say is. Please, Please, Please do not change the Lebanon Hills Park. May be One of the ONLY PARKS IN THE AREA, - FAMILIES CAN ENJOY NATURE - SO CLOSE TO HOME.</p> <p>Thank You</p>
14 6	Sue Fransen Way	7/28/15	<p>I have been a Lebanon Hills park user for over 25 years. I lived in Eagan for 20 years and enjoyed the park multiple times per week in all seasons. I now live in Minneapolis but still visit the park regularly to hike and run the dirt trails through the woods. As is, it is a marvelous escape from urban/suburban life. No more ASPHALT is needed, no trees need to be bulldozed down, no hills need to be leveled for people to continue to enjoy this park! PLEASE listen to the vast majority of opinion on this issue.</p>

			I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills should continue to be a unique destination which complements the regional park system. The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the Plan back to Dakota County for Meaningful Citizen Participation!
14 7	Jami Hughes	7/28/15	My name is Jami Hughes and I'm an Eagan resident. I do not support the submitted Plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Lebanon Hills should continue to be a unique destination which complements the regional park system. The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Please send the plan back to Dakota County for Meaningful Citizen Participation. Residents ARE NOT in support of the paved trails and destruction of the wildlife. I'm asking that the governing bodies do what they were elected to do and that is to represent the majority views when making decisions about this city and its parks. Thank you for your time!
14 8	Lynne Nelson	7/28/15	I live close to Lebanon Hills, and use the park for hiking, running, walking with my kids, cross country skiing (and I volunteer coach there too) and even a little mountain biking. I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills should continue to be a unique destination which complements the regional park system. The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the Plan back to Dakota County for Meaningful Citizen Participation.
14 9	Jolene Pasillas	7/28/15	I don not support the submitted master plan. The park should remain as is. There are not many parks in the area that offers the diversity that Lebanon hills offers. The beautiful part of the park is that it is unpaved, which allows people to forget that they are in the middle of the twin cities. Please listen to the majority, and do not fund this project. The park is pefect the way it is.
15 0	Jackson Tyler Eddy	7/28/15	Hello! As a 23 year resident of Eagan, MN I wanted to voice my opinion about the proposed plan here and let it be known that I do not support the submitted plan. The parks own logo and slogan are "Forever Wild"...there is nothing wild about disrupting an already well maintained park and paving over it. I understand accessibility but there are thousands of parks that are more accessible. I mean getting to the top of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park is not possible by everyone...even those who are not disabled. It doesn't mean we should build an elevator there. Lebanon Hills should continue to be a unique destination which complements the regional park system. The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the Plan back to Dakota County for Meaningful Citizen Participation. Thanks so much for listening and for doing your part in saving this wild gem in the south metro.
15 1	Rev. Thomas E Jenkins	7/29/15	I wanted to let you know that I do not support the Master Plan submitted by the Dakota County Commissioners for the development of Lebanon Hills Regional Park. Lebanon Hills provides distinct opportunities for the people of Dakota County and the surrounding area to experience the natural world in ways not offered by other parks or park systems. I have voiced my opposition to

			<p>this plan from the beginning. As a parent of a disabled child, I have appreciation for the attempts to provide opportunities for populations of people who may be excluded from using the park. However, I do not believe the needs of some individuals should outweigh the overwhelming resistance to the plan as proposed.</p> <p>You know by now that 97% of public input on this project was not in favor of the Board's proposed plan. My own commissioner, Tom Egan, went as far as to publicly admit he was wrong about the proposal and voted against it. Commissioner Chris Gerlach stated that the silence of the majority of Dakota county residents on this issue indicated their support. This is a completely illogical thought process. The overwhelming response of the public was against this proposal.</p> <p>I urge you to send this proposal back to the County so that meaningful citizen involvement can be used to determine the best stewardship of this special and valuable resource. Any action to support this plan further undermines the public's trust in our elected officials. They have not listened to their voters.</p>
15 2	John Tuset	7/29/15	<p>Please listen to the publics disapproval of Dakota County plan to destroy this park. Lately Dakota County seems to be taking actions on their own accord with no respect to what the tax payers request.</p> <p>Another example was where they tried to place eminent domain on houses in Inver Grove Heights- the property owner of the proposed development and current home owners worked out an agreement that everyone agreed on. I am sure the same can be done here</p>
15 3	David Heitzman	7/28/15	<p>Please allow me to register my very STRONG opposition to the current plan of renovation for lebanon hills.</p> <p>Mainly, I am VERY AGAINST a paved trail being put through the park. PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW THIS TRAVESTY TO BE CONSTRUCTED.</p> <p>My desire is that Lebanon Hills should be left in its present state, rugged trails, scenic, natural landscapes, and NO PAVEMENT, NO ASPHALT. I visit the park frequently and would be devastated by this kind of encroachment on its natural beauty.</p>
15 4	Nika Davies	7/29/15	<p>Please vote to return the Lebanon Hills Master Plan to the Dakota County Board of Commissioners for reconsideration. First for all the reasons I list in my letter to the SunThisWeek. Second because we have no money to repair current structures in the Lebanon Hills parks. I have attached a picture taken this spring of a shelter at Schulz Lake, part of Lebanon Hills. There is no money in the budget to maintain a bike corridor. This is already a massive problem in other parks. And lastly, I have attached a picture taken this spring at Schaar's Bluff/Spring Lake Reserve. This is the destruction necessary to build a bike corridor. I do not want this to happen in Lebanon Hills.</p> <p>Thank you for you consideration.</p> <p>Letters to the Editor<http://sunthisweek.com/category//Lettereditor/> Bikes and pedestrians don't mix</p>

			<p>Published July 9, 2015 at 9:26 am To the editor:</p> <p>The Metropolitan Council will be weighing in on the Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan this month. The plan currently includes a 6-mile multi-use thoroughfare through the park. It will meet ADA standards (width and slope) to provide access for families with small children and those with disabilities. However, they will be competing with two-way bike traffic.</p> <p>Think about it. There is a reason bicyclists are not allowed to use neighborhood sidewalks. Walkers and riders are not a good mix. In Minneapolis it took a pedestrian death to convince the Park and Recreation Board it should provide separate paths for cyclists and walkers. Bikes are not allowed on most beach boardwalks or the unpaved trails (including those at Lebanon Hills) because it is a dangerous mix.</p> <p>I think that our parkland should serve the entire community. But, if we want to provide a navigable, safe path for all, including people pushing strollers and/or walking with small children or those with mobility challenges we should create an accessible loop trail leading from the Visitor Center to a scenic lake setting. Portage Lake is a perfect location for such a path since it is already accessible by an aggregate road. This would require the plan to be sent back to Dakota County.</p> <p>If you agree please let the Metropolitan Council know. You can email them at public.info@metc.state.mn.us or call 651-602-1000. The park fauna and flora will thank you.</p>
15 5	Jill Judy	7/31/15	<p>As there is a community need for further recreational accessibility in Lebanon Hills, the current master plan may benefit from further public discussion, as well as county and Met Council examination.</p> <p>For example, the current on-line master plan map is not user friendly. The park and county need to develop a master plan map that is easier to follow, including road names, for public viewing. I have had difficulty understanding or reading any of the blurry, small-print of the on-line maps I have found thus far.</p> <p>In addition, the 6 mile long paved trail featured in the current master plan simply goes from one end of the park to the other. Who wants to walk or bike six miles, turn around, and come back six miles the same pathway? Serious bicyclists may choose to continue sticking to biking on roads with cars due to speed limitations of a pathway. Would it be possible to cross-country ski from one end of the park to the other on the asphalt trail? Will the asphalt trail be plowed during winter? What does “four season use” mean?</p> <p>The best benefit for the park may be from hosting small 1-2 mile loops for families with small children and for individuals who use wheelchairs wanting to travel shorter distances. Pathways may be more beneficial in popular sections of Lebanon Hills including Schulze and Jensen trail heads where families commonly visit.</p> <p>I have taken a child in a wheelchair on the partially paved section of Lebanon Hills because the wheel chair</p>

			<p>would not go over the uneven terrain, the roots, and the small pot holes of the dirt trails. So, I do see a need for a trail where all wheelchairs can be accommodated. Because it was only partially paved, we had to come back the same way. It may be better to have small loops around an area so you ended up where you started from.</p> <p>A company called Sylva located in Princeton, Minnesota (cell 612-845-9511) sells a wood fiber product called Soft Step which is marketed as compliant with ADA standards for Wheelchair Accessibility--ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials). It is also used on playgrounds for child safety. I would recommend trying this product for pathways in Lebanon Hills instead of paving. The company reports that wheelchairs run over this surface without a problem.</p> <p>I would not recommend the Metropolitan Council awarding grants to the Dakota County Park Board for Lebanon Hills unless there are short loops around an already popular public area for better accessibility for all. The long 6 mile paved pathway requires a lot more thought and input from many more public users.</p>
15 6	Meghann Charbonneau	7/28/15	<p>I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills should continue to be a unique destination which complements the regional park system. The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the Plan back to Dakota County for Meaningful Citizen Participation.</p> <p>I grew up in the midst of Lebanon Hills and to destroy the natural landscapes, etc would be a travesty.</p>
15 7	Angela Brewer	7/28/15	<p>I urge you to protect Lebanon Hills Regional Park from the 6 mile asphalt trail that's proposed by Dakota County Board. 97% of us citizens who commented are against it. The money for preserving parks should be used to preserve parks, not pave them. I love to bike and would be happy to bike around the perimeter of this park, along the road, without disrupting it's unique and diverse ecosystem. Thank you!</p>
15 8	Christopher Cannaday	7/28/15	<p>I do not support the submitted Plan; Lebanon Hills should continue to be a unique destination which complements the regional park system. The County Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the Plan back to Dakota County for Meaningful Citizen Participation.</p> <p>I, Christopher Cannaday, of Apple Valley Minnesota do not support the plan. Bulldozing, cutting down trees and tearing up the prairies for this asphalt trail will be destroying the purpose of Lebanon Hills. It is supposed to be an untouched wilderness in the cities. This proposal is just another example of over development. The route we are going there will be no nature left. Please reject this plan.</p>
15 9	Mike Stinson	7/27/15	<p>In a perfect world the commissioners of Dakota County would have taken heed of the surveys conducted over two years that clearly stated, "we the citizens of Dakota County, do not want a asphalt bike trail through of heart of Lebanon Hills Park." Alas it did not happen and they sent the request before you. Please take a look at the request and have the good grace and common sense to send it back. We can work this through.</p> <p>I use the park over 300 days a year and do not need nor desire a bike trail. A majority feel the same way.</p>
16 0	Jeff Bush	8/3/15	<p>I just wanted to let you know that I oppose the new trail being proposed in Lebanon Hills. I grew up in Eagan and spent over 20 years as a resident. I now live in Farmington and the park is still a big part of my life. I used to walk there as a child and would swim and fish in the park long before any of the new additions were available. I now use the trails more than ever and feel that it is already plenty accessible to anyone that wants to use the park.</p>

			<p>The addition of the new trail risk taking away more than it adds to this unique park. I feel we have paved enough in this state and have plenty of options available to those who need a paved trail.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and understanding.</p>
16 1	Kathy Klonecky	8/3/15	<p>I have spent countless hours reading through the 29 pages of the Met Council's on-line synopsis of the Dakota County Lebanon Hills Regional Park Master Plan. It is absolutely impossible to figure out anything from the maps. Americans with Disabilities Act standards are disregarded here as even persons with normal vision cannot comprehend them. Was this done on purpose to hide what's actually being presented in the plan?</p> <p>I have many friends who are "elderly" and some with disabilities such as knee and hip problems, as well as those using wheelchairs, walkers, and canes. I don't think you could get any of them to venture out on this proposed 6-mile trail, paved or not. A 6-mile trail is too long a trail for the vast majority of people using wheelchairs or people pushing strollers. It's too far from medical personnel, it's too far to turn back, it's too far in case of an emergency, and it's too fearsome praying a bike won't strike them. I know an "elderly" retired man in great physical shape who ran around Lake Phalen in St. Paul. A group of kids beat him up and left him for dead—a passerby found him and, somehow, he lived. In the middle-of-no-where is no safe place for anyone, let alone the defenseless disabled. Six miles was poor planning. A long hidden trail should be contrary to ADA regulations to ensure safety of the disabled.</p> <p>Consulting with a variety of individuals with disabilities and those who use wheelchairs, as well as family members caring for a person with a disability, is needed in discovering exactly what it is park visitors actually want from the park. The County Parks and the ADA can recommend lots of possibilities, but what people with disabilities <i>really</i> want can be totally different than what someone else plans for them. If what they specifically want is not there, they will not use the facility no matter what the ADA dictates.</p> <p>What needs to happen is to get input from <i>many</i> members of the disabled community themselves. Where is this input? If they haven't come forward, they probably are not interested in using it. The Dakota County Board needs to search them out.</p> <p>So far, I have read comments by only ONE person--actually disabled at this time--who claimed he would use the proposed 6-mile asphalt path, while others who are also disabled oppose ripping up Lebanon Hills for this behemoth asphalt. In a published commentary by this ONE disabled individual who uses a wheelchair, he wrote: "Are there other parks where I <u>can</u> use my chair? Yes." [Star Tribune February 25, 2015]. His use of the word "can" infers that although these parks are currently available to him, he has not even used them. He states that his use of the Park "would be recreational." Lebanon Hills is nature, not a recreational sport arena that can be found elsewhere, and nature-lovers desire it to stay that way as this is a one-of-a-kind nature haven.</p> <p>The ADA guidelines clearly state that they are flexible: "A key concept is that...not all facilities must necessarily be made accessible." That is, if an activity is "accessible to and usable by people with disabilities," the public entity can accept an alternate existing location as complete compliance. [AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, ADA Update: A Primer for State and Local Governments. Last updated: June 8,</p>

			<p>2015.]</p> <p>If what the Dakota County Park Board really wants is a BIKE ROAD, they should advertise it as that, not pretend it is for the elderly and disabled. I'm sorry, but tearing up that much terrain and displacing the little critters who call it home is not environmentally friendly. No matter that existing plants are weeds, the critters couldn't care less. Buckthorn removal can happen without putting in an asphalt road. Bikers can find better locations to bike. Since I can't comprehend the on-line maps, I can't comment on their worth. I do know that the 6-mile asphalt road is something I would not stake my money on. Since the Met Council's money is MY state taxpayer money, I do NOT want the Met Council giving one penny to what is basically a bikeway that even bikers may not use. As a hiker, I prefer to traverse on ground or wood-chipped ground.</p> <p>I found it rather humorous that when Dakota County Commissioners couldn't convince the public to flat-out support their ridiculous 6-mile asphalt road, they "appointed," hand-picked, a "<i>citizen panel</i>" to echo their exact same plan in an attempt to quell the opposition. Residents here aren't stupid. We all know this GAME. It's been used in Dakota County for years. People who apply to be on such a panel are rejected if they do not agree with the bosses. Besides, how can such a puny sampling be of any significance? Where was the diversity? Where were all the bikers? (One bike shop OWNER who may benefit from selling more bikes!). Where were all the elderly and disabled folks? (One disabled veteran.)</p> <p>"The majority of commissioners [five!] contended <i>the paved path</i> is needed to meet the needs of people with disabilities and the county's aging population." Where on earth, I wonder, did they get this mistaken idea when the majority of the public (thousands) do not agree? Yes, thousands. <i>Every</i> single person I have spoken with about this Lebanon Hills 6-mile plan is against it. They either didn't know about it at all until I told them or their frustration with powerful government entities who always get-their-own-way against sensible public opinion have made them meek so have given up on fighting. Let there be no mistake: outrage and anger against these government entities is widespread in Dakota County regarding this Lebanon Hills Regional Park that is on the verge of forever-after disaster.</p> <p>Metropolitan Council: YOU ALONE can protect <i>THIS</i> Lebanon Hills land as a natural habitat. People who truly love Minnesota's great outdoors and care about it do <i>NOT</i> want this land subject to the whims of political fads.</p>
16 2	Tim Judy	8/4/15	<p>I am writing the Metropolitan Council to voice my displeasure in our Dakota County Park Board Commissioners who are not doing right by their citizens.</p> <p>Lebanon Hills Regional Park belongs to multitudes of people and not to five commissioners who seem to be convincing a few, and that is a very few, others to remain indifferent to the pleas of the many. In fact, caring people are being ridiculed. Are we such a throwaway society that we have to give up touchy wilderness ecosystems for more and more recreation? We have enough recreation in Dakota County and in Minnesota. What we lack is wilderness. No matter that it isn't pristine. This messy wilderness is what nature lovers, as well as</p>

			<p>wildlife, crave. The reason this has turned into such a controversy is that more and more of us are finally figuring out that something fishy is going on. And, we will not succumb to the unfounded reasoning that is being thrown at the unpersuaded public.</p> <p>Many people will never set foot in <u>any</u> park in Dakota County and they are the ones who won't say anything because they are not going to care. The ones who really matter are the ones who are against the paved path because they represent a lot of citizens. Those who say they want the paved path are a minority and those people have the opportunity to go to any other park in the Dakota County system or the entire state.</p> <p>I understand that "The Council's role in the review of the master plan is to ensure that it is consistent with the <i>Regional Parks Policy Plan</i> and other Council policies and does not negatively impact the Council's other systems—Transportation, Aviation, and Wastewater Services." However, YOU DO NOT have to give FUNDING for this 6 mile trail.</p> <p>There are so many worthwhile improvements at this Park and at others in this state that will truly support nature and the public. Give MY money to a worthwhile cause. Do not squander it on this false attempt to rip up our wild places for the satisfaction, the egos, and the victory of five self-important county commissioners.</p> <p>The FIVE commissioners who voted for this terrible 6 mile asphalt debacle have rights that hundreds of citizens have been stripped of. What happened to FAIR play?</p>
16 3	Rafe Jones	8/3/15	<p>My name is Rafe Jones, and I live in Eagan. I'm writing to express my opposition to the plan in its present form. The wilderness character in the park is unique within the regional park system, and its preservation should be an essential feature of any master plan. I am also dismayed that public input was so thoroughly ignored by the Dakota County Board. The Board disregarded 97 percent of public input, and two of its own Commissioners. Send the plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.</p>
16 4	Patricia Lueth (3)	8/4/15	<p>I was not able to make the meeting today with the met council regarding Lebanon Hills Regional Park's Master Plan for new paved trails and development. (Spring Lake Park Reserve applies as well). I am not a good public speaker as I get too emotional about this subject - and have never been good at speaking in front of people. The following is my comments I wish I could speak out loud to MANY people and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!</p> <p>Criteria in the Regional Parks Policy Plan includes Citizen Participation. To meet this criteria, Dakota County solicited feedback from the public through a number of methods.</p> <p>Consistently and overwhelmingly the public has responded -- they do not support the County's plan, in particular, the paved trail constructed end to end through Lebanon Hills. The Star Tribune reported that 97% of the 670 comments received were opposed to the Plan, the paved trail in particular. At the County Board meeting on March 17, Commissioner Schouweiler stated "I can't believe that out of the 650-plus comments, there were only 22 that were for the plan...What happened to representative government." At that same meeting Commissioner</p>

			<p>Egan noted "There is no passion for the paved trail at all."</p> <p>The other five Commissioners decided their agenda was more important, and this controversial Plan was adopted. Sadly, their Plan results in a significant loss to the metropolitan regional parks system.</p> <p>As noted in one of the 670 comments received, "... the plan creates too much development in one of the last truly natural spaces we have in the Twin Cities metro. We have beautiful waterways and natural spaces in our county parks. But the development has gone too far. I understand the desire for amenities and paved trails but we have plenty in our many other parks. Citizens do NOT want a system where every park is identical and offers the same thing. Also, the cost to develop this plan when we have many other more important needs in our community is irresponsible! There is also cost (massive disruption) and loss of our natural resources within these parks.</p> <p>Our regional parks system is large ~ there is opportunity for this one place to be managed differently than the other parks...and that doesn't mean only for able-bodied visitors. Greater accessibility can be achieved at Lebanon Hills without constructing a thoroughfare through the park.</p> <p>Dakota County has hundreds of existing bikeways, and 200 miles of greenway trails are planned. No one will be lacking for opportunities on pavement, but what will be lost are the unique nature-based recreation and education opportunities which are hard to find in urban settings. Instead of a unique destination, Lebanon Hills is now slated to look like so many other parks we already have.</p> <p>As noted in Met Council's report, Dakota County solicited feedback from the public. But then they disregarded it and moved their agenda along. If Citizen Participation is simply a box that needs to be checked off, then you too will move this plan along. But if Citizen Participation is intended to be meaningful -- then it is your duty to send this plan back to Dakota County.</p>
16 5	Scott Johnson (2)	8/5/15	<p>(Also submitted to the Star Tribune)</p> <p>I attended the August 4, 2015 Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission meeting For the coming Community Development Committee of August 17, 2015. In this meeting the Commission reviewed the \$ 27.5 MILLION Lebanon Hills park facilities expansion and paving boondoggle that is opposed by 97% of the citizens of Dakota County. True numbers, taken from the County Board minutes of March 2015.</p> <p>This commission heard from a large number of people about the questionable budget figures for this expansion, the lack of a good track record by Dakota county commissioners dating back decades to budget for and maintain existing trails and facilities. County planners apparently only know how to build more trails, buildings and bridges, not maintain those they already have. Some past projects by these professional park planners have had cost over runs of 13 times the initial projected costs!</p> <p>The Met Council commission heard about the 670 opposition letters and the 20 favorable letters that were presented to the Dakota County board last March. The MET Council commissioners also heard about the 161</p>

			<p>letters opposed and the 3 (yes...only 3 in support) they had received in just the past month. They even acknowledged that this issue has generated the largest amount of public opposition and comments in their years on the Met Council park commission.</p> <p>This commission acknowledged that it appears the citizens do not want any park expansion, Zoo trail and bridges, Spring Lake Park expansion, etc. But all but one of these non-elected appointees did not have the courage to do anything but rubber stamp the proposal request and pass it up to the full Met Council. Why did you even have a vote if you (the commission) feel the law does not allow you say NO? Ever heard of a jury telling a prosecutor that this is an unjust prosecution? When good people look the other way, and allow evil and wrong doing to continue, there is no hope for justice in this world. It is time to show our elected political leaders the citizens have had enough of your arrogance and waste of our hard earned tax dollars.</p> <p>The Met Council commissioners said they could only vote no if the County had not met the requirements of the law in their planning process. The Met Council told us at the meeting that one of those requirements was to consider the needs of all Park users and stakeholders. Obviously there is no concern for the 97% of the taxpayers who are saying no. We were then told that projections are for immigrants and low income users to increase from 10% today to 30% in the coming years. Here is a clear violation of your rules as there were ZERO immigrants or people of color on the appointed Dakota County citizens review panel. (Which was stacked with metro political insiders, some with a financial gain connection to any park expansion.)</p> <p>I guess I am also confused as to why the Met Council would think an immigrant from the jungles of Asia, sands of Africa, or desert of Mexico would prefer to walk on a concrete path in our woods instead of natural turf. Why they think females are afraid to walk in the woods on grass, but feel safe on a concrete trail. Must be a cultural thing I am unaware of as a third generation, North American white American male.</p> <p>I also found it suspiciously odd that no members of the Dakota County board of commissioners felt the need to show respect to the Met Council to attend this meeting and defend their request for \$ 27.5 million dollars. I strongly urge the public to write to the Met Council (public.info@metc.state.mn.us), your local State legislator, and to your own friends and ask them to oppose this destruction of our park jewels and waste of public Legacy Fund and other tax dollars. Next year is an election year, it is time for a change in numerous public offices in the counties and state offices in Minnesota.</p> <p>Ask yourself: Where in the Master Plan has the wishes of 97% of your citizens been respected?</p>
16 6	Laura Hedlund (4)	8/5/15	<p>After yesterday's open space meeting, I went to my neighborhood night out party. There is widespread frustration about a \$27 million dollar plan for our signature park which has less than 3% of the citizens on record as supporting the plan. In the last round of comments, 168 people wrote in to the Met Council only 2 people supported the plan. Democracy is about sharing power. I hope the Met Council lives up the core of representative government and represent the public. How could citizens be any clearer? Would we have needed 99.9% instead of 98.4%?</p> <p>Access for all and ecological responsibility are shared values in our community and especially in the Minnesota</p>

DFL party. These values do not conflict. Nor should the people who care about these values conflict. A multi-use asphalt trail does not offer people in wheelchairs a wilderness experience. Lebanon Hills is far more generous. I joked here at AM950 that it is liberating to be so stable - Kai & I together for 30 plus years, work at AM950 for 11 plus years - allows me the freedom to care. With the exception of Sandy who has taken the time to listen and understand, I feel discounted. Instead of listening, people are labeled "crazies" or even "tyrants"

If even I... with such deep DFL roots... is turned off by this. Can you imagine what the general public will think as the DFL Met Council moves forward a \$27 million plan with less than 2% support? The ecological damage in Spring Lake Park where a \$1 million trail became a \$13 million trail and eminent domain was used for a bike trail may also be in the news in 2016. Remember \$2 million dollars of legacy funds were used to blast bluffs, clear cut 37 acres and they did not even bother to count the trees.

I have studied non violent communication for 11 years and frankly it is a challenge to walk my talk. I know deep abundance is required to create the change I want to see in the world. I believe in democracy. Fundamental to a healthy living system is communication among all parts. this communication has been blocked. You may be aware that in any relationship, there is great value - although it can be painful - to go towards the discomfort. This is the place of healing.

Below are the reasons the master plan for Lebanon Hills should go back to Dakota County:

- 1) Public involvement is important. If the county was responding to public input - then why are so few people supporting this plan?
- 2) This master plan was grounded on the Greenway Concept which is now NOT part of the plan. If the county look at Lebanon Hills in terms of how to best achieve a quality experience for people in wheelchairs, the plan would be very different. I am troubled that the Dakota County Park Planners have worked with HKGI since at least 2008. I think they used this one firm exclusively - I know they spent over one million dollars on them. In 2001 two citizen volunteers and one staff member hired the consultant. The 2001 plan had no negative comments when it got to the met council - as I recall.
- 3) The greenway is in now in flux. It would be logical to wait until a new vision for the greenway arises before moving forward with this master plan.
- 4) Under represented groups. Dakota County is now embarking on a major research effort to reach communities of color. It makes sense to write the long term plan for the park after this research effort. No African-Americans, Asians or Hispanics were included in this master planning process.

Here are my personal reasons:

I cannot be fully human without being in relationship with nature. A friend who husband died shares that travels miles every day to find a quiet place the humans have not yet paved and there she sits. It is when she is with "intact ecological reality" she finds healing. Where in the Twin Cities can a person in a wheelchair find the type of respite and healing my friend finds by being quietly in nature?

			<p>We need nature in ways we do not comprehend. Humans are only at the beginning of grasping the complexity of living systems. It is highly likely that, sadly, human engineers are grossly misunderstanding living systems. If we learn that asphalt causes cancer or interferes with our biospheres and decide to rip up the asphalt, we also may learn how many generations it will take to repair the damage.</p> <p>All people need to know that asphalt is not required to “be” in nature. Young and old need genuine experiences with nature. "We are not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature." Pope Francis said in his recent encyclical letter.</p> <p>Listen to the attach radio clip from the July 18 Food Freedom Radio show with http://socialecologies.net founder Nance Klemm. The laughter and sigh communicates the complexity of argument. You can hear the show at AM950radio.com if you give me your personal email I'll send the short clip.</p> <p>Future generations NEED some intact land. Really. What have we left? We need to build from these fragments, not further fragment our public space.</p> <p>Intact land – may have things needed for human health which we simply do not understand. Here is one example: http://journal.hep.com.cn/laf/EN/10.1007/slaf-0054-0301-xx</p>
16	Stacey Jenkins	8/9/15	<p>Dear Met Council Development Members,</p> <p>I'm writing in opposition to the proposed plan for development in Lebanon Hills. I'm particularly concerned about the connector bike path that would require a wide swath being cut right through the middle of the park. I tried to voice my comments with the Dakota County Commissioners, but felt like they disregarded the overwhelming opposition from those who commented on the project. Please do not approve this plan as it stands and send it back to the County for further work.</p>

No.	Name	Date	Comments with clarifications regarding the Master Plan (through 8/11/15) (verbatim—no edits were made)
1	Fred Bretschger (2)	7/7/15	<p>Thank you very much for this information and alerting me of postponement of Master Plan on today's agenda. I am relieved to know that the horse trails at Lebanon Hills are not in the kind of danger i was led to believe. Feeling a little embarrassed that I was gearing up for a big debate. Always good to get all the facts. It was a pleasure talking with you today. Have a great summer.</p>

No.	Name	Date	Comments in Support of the Master Plan (through 8/11/15) (verbatim—no edits were made)
1	Kimaree Poole	6/26/15	I am in favor of a 6 mile asphalt trail at Lebanon Hills Park. I am 62 years old and in great health but the day will come when I will need access to a paved trail. This is a small part of a huge park and I think the opponents are making much ado about nothing (and this is coming from a strong environmentalist!). The main thing is to build it discretely and in harmony with it's surroundings. Thank you.
2	Wayne Sames	6/29/15	<p>As former co-chair of the Lebanon Hills Master Plan Advisory Panel, retired outdoor recreation professional and frequent user of the park, I'm submitting some personal comments and observations regarding the proposed plan that was subsequently approved by the county commissioners and submitted to the Parks and Open Space Advisory Commission. While I agree with the general consensus statements and recommendations of the Panel, the following statements reflect my own opinions.</p> <p>I've been concerned and troubled by the deluge of letters to the editor and guest editorials over the past year from opponents to some of the elements of the proposed plan. I've seen and heard many inaccuracies, distortions and misleading statements from the opponents. Here's my perspective on some issues they have raised:</p> <p>1. Lebanon Hills as a "wilderness": I have back-packed and canoed in many federally designated wilderness areas. I do not consider Lebanon Hills to be a wilderness. The federal definition is that "...a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Lebanon Hills has definitely been trammelled by man. Decades of agricultural use have seriously degraded the original natural habitats. Soil has eroded into lakes; most of the land has previously been cultivated, pastured or used as woodlots for many decades; old farm roads and trails (which many of us love to hike) criss-cross the area; many plant species have been replaced by less biologically diverse habitats and invasive species; a power line bisects the east portion; roads divide the three sections; and park infrastructure has been developed (though at a lower level than in most regional parks). Only a few small areas are considered by the DNR to be high quality natural communities, with the remainder being of moderate biodiversity, not meeting criteria, or not even rated.</p> <p>The park is a large vegetated open space area and that, in itself, is of real value. As a whole, the park is one of the larger regional parks (as opposed to park reserves) in the system. It does offer opportunities for getting away from the crowds and feeling a sense of solitude, but the repeated description of the park as a "wilderness" is misleading and, perhaps, intentionally so. Who doesn't want to protect "wilderness"? Even if the proposed development, including the corridor trail, were to take place, the vast majority of the existing natural surface trail mileage and area would remain available for those wishing to pursue that experience.</p> <p>The advisory panel did strongly recommend increased habitat restoration efforts and measures to stabilize and improve water quality and I agree wholeheartedly with those recommendations.</p> <p>2. The Corridor Trail: The proposed corridor trail, particularly as envisioned with the design and development</p>

		<p>guidelines suggested by the Panel and incorporated into the proposed plan, would provide a legitimate, compatible outdoor recreation experience for bikers, wheelchair users, parents with strollers and walkers who may find existing natural surface trails unavailable or unmanageable. These users are currently not well served by the park, though their use preferences and needs are every bit as valid as those of the opponents. It would also provide a needed bike and pedestrian connection between the campground and the visitor center. The integration of regional parks and trails has always been part of the long range vision for the metropolitan system.</p> <p>The panel recommended, and the proposed plan includes, numerous references and guidelines to ensure that the proposed trail is designed and developed with minimal impact and with the recreational nature of its intended use in mind. As recommended, it would not go through the "heart" of the park (as some opponents claim), but rather through more peripheral areas. It would bypass the largest area of "moderate" biodiversity woodland-forest surrounding Portage/Cattail/Schulze lakes. Development of the corridor trail itself would offer opportunities for restoration, as shown in the draft plan. Interpretive stations, pull-offs and overlooks would provide for a very enjoyable outdoor recreation experience for families and other trail users. The advisory panel suggested measures to reduce development impacts and accelerate restoration along the trail corridor and the county commissioners appear to share those concerns.</p> <p>Again, natural surface trail users would continue to have ample opportunities to enjoy their preferred activities without ever having to pass a bike or step on an asphalt trail.</p> <p>3. Expanded Outdoor Recreation Opportunities: Lebanon Hills Regional Park should remain a trail oriented area, but there is ample room for expanded outdoor recreational opportunities for users other than hikers. The park is seriously under-used for picnicking due to a shortage of facilities, particularly for larger family groups. The plan addresses this need with proposals for expanded picnic facilities. Persons with disabilities (including students on field trips), families with strollers, people with limited mobility and others will benefit from proposed hard surface trails around the visitor center, Holland Lake and other higher use areas. Currently, these people cannot easily access many areas in the park, even many areas near the visitor center. The proposed expansion of the visitor center would accommodate larger school groups and facilitate more flexible use of the area by a variety of groups for environmental education, outdoor learning activities, etc.</p> <p>3. The Opposition: Several letters and statements by opposition members have characterized their views as representative of the general public. They cite responses to questionnaires, attendance at public meetings, etc., as proof that they speak for the general public. None of these are scientific measures of how "the public" might feel about the Lebanon Hills plan, much less what they might think if they were more fully and accurately informed about the plan. What they have seen in letters to the editors, if they have even seen them, is certainly biased and often grossly misleading. My guess is most of the general public isn't paying much attention and may not even care one way or the other. But that's just my guess, no more valid perhaps than the opponents' claims. I do know from long personal experience with controversial public natural resource and outdoor recreation issues that the opponents of a proposed action are usually much more motivated to show up, organize and express their opinions than those who are OK with a proposal or don't really care. The opponents certainly have every right to express their opinions, but they do not have a right to make up their own "facts", which I think they have done all too often during this planning</p>
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			<p>process.</p> <p>Ironically, my recreation preferences probably correspond with many of the opposition group. I like to hike the natural surface trails and get away from the more developed and higher use areas, though I use those areas, too. I haven't been on my bike for a few years (though I would enjoy biking the proposed corridor trail much more than the noisy, straight, mostly boring trails along county roads). What I apparently do not have in common with them is a willingness to share a relatively small portion of the park with others who may have different, though equally valid, recreational desires or preferences. I believe I will still have plenty of opportunities to experience feelings of quiet and solitude with very little, if any, inconvenience or sacrifice. I look forward to increased efforts toward park restoration, hope that the plan will be adopted, and that Lebanon Hills Regional Park will provide even better recreational experiences for future generations.</p>
3	Donna Osacho	7/28/15	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>I seem to be in the vast minority at least of those who are voicing their opinion - however - I fully support enhancing Lebanon Hills Regional Park with a six-mile paved trail.</p> <p>There are miles upon miles of a variety of types of trails for people who are blessed with no physical impairment. People don't consider -what if you are healthy and unimpaired your entire life then suddenly find yourself impaired and you love the outdoors? In the Twin Cities area we are blessed with myriads of options of wilderness type parks. However none or none that I'm aware of that cater to physically impaired people for more than a very small area.</p> <p>Adding a paved trail to LHR Park would be a unique enhancement for the City of Eagan that could extend an opportunity to those less fortunate.</p> <p>Thank you for your time</p>

ATTACHMENT C: WILDERNESS IN THE CITY FLYER

Future of Lebanon Hills Regional Park **FOREVER WILD...or FOREVER PAVED?**



Natural wilderness (above left) and the same section of the park following project implementation of a multi-use bike trail through Spring Lake Park Reserve in Dakota County ~ Spring 2015

Recap: Dakota County's Plan for Lebanon Hills — Construct a 6-mile, asphalt, multi-use bike trail through the park which will be kept free of snow and ice. This means:

- Bulldozing hills and significant tree clearance required for construction.
- Remove miles of existing woodlands and prairies; disrupt and fragment wildlife habitat.
- More buildings, more pavement, and expanded parking lots at trailheads.

Draft plan was opposed by 97% of 690 public comments received. (Star Tribune, 3/11/15)

What's Next: The Metropolitan Council is currently reviewing this controversial \$28 million plan.

- The Plan must be adopted by the Metropolitan Council to be eligible for funding.
- Public meetings are expected in July and August but dates are not yet confirmed.

TAKE ACTION! This is not over — Lebanon Hills needs your help.

(OVER)

If you do not agree with Dakota County's Plan for Lebanon Hills, here's what you can do:

Share your view on this issue with the Metropolitan Council and your Council Member

Met Council Member (Eagan): Mr. Steven Chavez — steven.chavez@metc.state.mn.us 612-670-8952

Met Council: public.info@metc.state.mn.us

and Copy: jan.youngquist@metc.state.mn.us [Jan Youngquist, Regional Parks Manager]

Suggested comment to submit with personal message (include your name and city):

- Send the Plan back to Dakota County for meaningful citizen participation.
- The County Board disregarded 97% of public input received.
- I do not support the submitted plan for Lebanon Hills Regional Park.

Contact your elected State Legislators

Funding will come from State funds, including Legacy Amendment dollars. Tell your State Legislators how you feel about Dakota County spending taxpayer dollars on development in Lebanon Hills.

State Senator Jim Carlson — sen.jim.carlson@senate.mn 651-297-8073

State Representative Laurie Halverson — rep.laurie.halverson@house.mn 651-296-4128

Stay Informed

- **Join our email list:** wildernessinthecity@gmail.com
- **Visit our website:** www.wildlebanonhills.org

Tell your friends, family and co-workers about this issue.

Wilderness in the City

A 501(c)3 non-profit community organization dedicated to preserving natural urban space.